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Quarterly Research Journal of the Tamil University

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Tamil Civilization is a quarterly research *Journal* of the Tamil University intended for the researchers in Tamilology and Indology, history of the migration of the Tamils to different parts of the world, and their social and cultural problems.

The *Journal* will contain articles, notes, reviews and reports on Tamil language and literature, temple architecture, history, epigraphy, translation, sculpture, dance, drama, painting, music, ancient sciences, ancient industry, siddha medicine, linguistics and all other aspects of the Tamil and related cultures.

Articles, reviews, notes and announcements typed in double line space (three copies) are requested from scholars for publication 50 off-prints will be issued free of cost to authors in additon to a copy of *Tamil Civilization*. Diacritical marks of the *Tamil Lexicon* should be followed

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Vol.I No.4 December 1983

PAINTING SPECIAL

(Collection of Seminar Papers)

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THANJAVUR
TAMIL NADU
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The photographs in this volume are by the courtesy of the Archaeological Survey of India

THE EDITOR'S NOTE

Under the gracious guidance of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor Dr.V.I.Subramoniam the Department of Painting of the Tamil University organised a two day seminar on November 5 and 6, 1982, at the campus. The chief aim of the Seminar was to project a sharp profile of painting in TamilNadu stressing the growth and development in its various phases from the earliest times to the present day Many scholars participated in the discussions The lectures that were delivered and the papers that were presented have been carefully edited and are included in this volume. With the participation of such renowned artists and scholars as Dr.K.K Hebbar, President of Lalit Kala Akademi (National Academy of Art), New Delhi, Karl.J.Khandalavala, Bombay, an authority on Indian miniatures and Professor V R.Amberkar, Bombay, a highly respected scholar and historian, the Seminar had the impact of a national event. Dr.Hebbar inaugurated the Seminar, Khandalavala delivered the Valedictory Address, the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor presided over the inaugural session, Professor Amberkar delivered an extempore speech on 'The Artist's Concept of Art', Dr.A.S.Raman, Professor of Painting, Tamil University, welcomed the gathering and Dr.C R.Srinivasan formerly of the Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University, proposed a vote of thanks. Twenty-nine acrylic paintings based on the theme of Terukoothu were on view at a one-man show, specially organised by the famous artist, P. Krishnamurthi who came all the way from Madras Kuppuswamy Raja, the well-known master-craftman, demonstrating the Thanjavur style of painting on jackwood with the help of his students brought out the essential grace and harmony of this distinctive school. The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor's good will valuable co-operation and constant advice and guidence contributed to the success of the Seminar

We were confronted with three problems when we took up the articles and speeches for editing and for preparing the copy for the press. First, translation. For the convenience of the three distinguished principal participants, from New Delhi and Bombay we had to conduct the proceedings in English . Therefore, we had to get the papers and transcripts of extempore speeches translated into Tamil. It was very difficult for us to find translators who were

not only good at Tamil as well as English but had a feeling for the nuances of terms used in art criticism and art history so that they could bring out the spirit of the original ideas without damaging the content and style. Judged by the quality of the finished product we may say with a sense of pride that our attempts have not been in vain. Secondly transcription. Not all participants had papers for presentation at the Seminar. In fact more than half of them spoke extempore and of course they acquitted themselves splendidly. But the recording of their speeches was not satisfactory. Modulations of the voice and pauses, accompanied by frequent power failures, left their speeches either unrecorded or badly recorded. Those who spoke extempore were: Dr.-Hebbar, Karl Khandalavala, Dr.R.Naga swamy, Professor Amberker, Principal L.Munuswamy and Dr.A.V.Jayachendran. Their speeches could not be fully recorded for technical reasons. But whatever was recorded has been faithfully reproduced in this volume As for the discussions, we were keen on including them here. But they could not be recorded properly because of irregular power supply. The interrupted recording destroyed the coherence and clarity of the discussions. There was only sound but no sense. The transcripts made confused and unintelligible reading. Thirdly, repetition and over lapping Some speakers expressed identical views which we decided to retain with a view to emphasising the consensus on a particular controversial issue.

Dr.K.V.Raman could not attend the Seminar. But his paper was read out by Dr.M.Hariharan formerly of the Department of Music, Tamil University. Later Dr.Raman was kind enough to send us his own Tamil translation of his paper along with seven relevant photographs. We have included these in the volume. K.R.Srinivasan, M.Arunachalam and Dr.N.Subrahmanian helped us by sending their own Tamil versions of their papers. Indeed, they made our task easier. Dr.Nagasamy and N.Harinarayana illustrated their talks with slides.

We are aware that the scope of the Seminar could have been enlarged so as to include the various unexplored areas. But as a beginning we feel the Seminar was significant enough. To understand the hoary traditions of painting in Tamil Nadu in the correct, perspective and to relate them to the contemporary situation through an exchange of views at an intellectual level such seminars are necessary. They will prepare the ground for future study and investigation in depth. Viewed in this context, the Seminar may be regarded as a first step in the right direction.

A word of thanks to N.S.Ramasamy and S.Paramasivam for going through the manuscripts both in English and Tamil and for offering several useful suggestions

A.S.Raman,
Editor.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

K.K.Hebbar

Public interest in art has never been encouraging. In recent years it has been particularly disappointing. What is shocking is that the so-called intelligentsia, such as doctors, engineers, lawyers and other professionals and the students pursuing advanced studies are totally indifferent to art. Art exhibitions don't attract them. But any other show draws a big crowd. For example, if it is cinema, you will never get one seat vacant and this has become a regular feature. Who is responsible, Sir? Please, Vice-Chancellor Sir, I am not being personal. Only I am expressing my feeling. I am purging my emotions before this august body.

You are the moulders of public taste. If only the college students show awareness of art and take interest in it, I think 50% of the job is done. Their parents will get involved and their whole surroundings will change.

It is unfortunate that today everything has become very commercial. For example, without capitation fees, educational institutions give no admissions. You can just imagine the plight of our talented but poor students. Many circumstances may be forcing the colleges to collect capitation fees. I am not concerned. I am just telling you how the situation is. Everything has become so commercial. There is very little room for aesthetics. Only we read about it and that's all. We have finished with it. Where is the climate for creation? Or for serious research?

I am sure that real research means not only probing into the past, but relating it to the present. How to project the past to the future, how our artisans will be rehabilitated and how our public will get enlightenment and make the best use of their lives-these are the questions our research scholars should answer. And we need guidance and direction. If we succeed, all of us will be more than satisfied.

I must thank you, Sir, for inviting me to be among you on this important occasion and for giving me the opportunity of inaugurating this very significant Seminar. Once again, Sir, I thank you on my own behalf and on behalf of the Lalit Kala Akademi also.

Thank you.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

V.I Subramoniam

In this young University which has plans for comprehensive research in literature, art and sciences, I have great pleasure in welcoming renowned art critics, painters and teachers of art for a two day sitting to discuss the outlines and trends in Indian painting in general and paintings in Tamil Nadu and other Southern States in particular.

My personal interest in painting and other plastic arts is two fold:

While painting dextrously makes use of colour categories like black and white, red and yellow, purple and orange, blue and scarlet, has the growth of painting anything to do with the richness of the vocabulary of the language or family of languages like Dravidian or Indo-Aryan? Tamil as well as other Dravidian languages have a contrastive pair in black and white (*karruppu-vellai*) red and yellow (cevappu-manchal) which are part of the colour spectrum. The latter pair, red and yellow, is not contrastive like black and white. The colour blue (niilam) is borrowed from the Indo Aryan language. Orange, purple, brown, grey, etc., are conveyed by periphrasis like light-yellow (ila manchal) light red (ilam cevappu) or by object colours like brown (caana niram-cowdung colour), like grey (caampal niram-ash colour). Single word tags and phrase word tags exhaust the naming of colours of the spectrum: Some words of the former category are indigenous and some borrowedor coined. This has been the case with all areas of human knowledge and experience. Since the Ajanta and Bagh paintings with several colours were adopted in the early Buddhistic cave paintings and the Jain Paintings in Thirumalaipuram, Tinnevelly District, Cittannavaasal, Pudukottai District and appreciated by modern critics, the availability of a rich or poor colour spectrum cannot be the cause of growth or dearth of painting. Other causes have to be identified for the growth of the schools of paintings.

Vocabulary formation and the manifestation of colour in paintings are distinct areas where a one to one correlation cannot be established. Also perception of different colours in painting is not conditioned by colour vocabulary as the relativists led by B.L.Whorf thought. Paintings, etc., illustrate very well the feeble connection between colour vocabulary and artistic creation and appreciation.

Another question which always fascinated literary critics is whether the development of literature matches with the development of plastic arts-painting included and the performing arts. Here I have not drawn a negative answer like the first one.

Literature of Tamil can be classified as

1) Pre-mythological (the Sangam classics which have very little of ritualistic religion, hence classified as secular).

2) Mythological, the earliest was a blend of Jainism and Buddhism (Cilappatihkaaram is an example) then individualised in later epics like Manimekalai which is Buddhistic and Civaka Cintaamani and *Perunkatai which elaborate Jain* mythology Kambar's Ramayana which elaborates the Vaishnavite mythology, the Teevaaram and Naalaayira Prabhandhams which are collections of the experience of the Saivite Nayanmars and Vaishnavite Alwars. This mythological trend covers the Islamic and Christian themes from the 15th Century A.D. in Tamil.

3) In the late Nineteenth Century when English was brought very near to the Tamils and others through the English education, the modern trend has set on literature, which has led to experimentation. This has resulted in the dissociation with the past in some quarters and critical evalution of the tradition and continuance of the mytho logical themes in limited circles.

The secular trend, which is the earliest, is rediscovered in the folk creations which still form the substratum with the unlettered in the rural areas.

The Mohenjodaro-Harappa paintings of animals on the pottery, one of the earliest specimens of painting, still survive with the folk paintings or more precisely with the folk drawings of the Punjab. The pictorial resemblance of the recently discoveredKiilvaalai near Villuppuram, Tamil Nadu,cave paintings and the writing system found under them in the Mohenjodaro-Harappa Script and their resemblance to the Punjab folk *drawings on the walls and figures in the* carpets were pointed out by us when the pictures were brought to our notice. Near to this site, in the Chaitya cave, the Buddhists preserve the painting of animals resembling the cave drawings of other countries

These pre-religious paintings are followed by the Buddhistic paintings of Ajanta *and Bagh which are based on the* Jataka mythology of the Buddhists The Cittannavaasal paintings are based on the Jain mythology. The Ellora paintings and the cave paintings of Badami are based on the Hindu mythology. The Thirumalaipuram paintings in the Tinnevely District are Buddhistic with a later layer of Hindu mythology. The Narthamalai and the Tanjore Brihadeshwara *temple* paintings are on Hindu mythology. The Vijayanagara paintings in Tirupparutti Kunram are on Jain themes. The Nayak paintings are on the Hindu mythological themes especially those in Tanjore and Tiruvalanchuli. The Chera paintings in Tirunandikkara, Mattancheri and Padmanavhapuram are based on Hindu Puranic stories. Pallava paintings in Paanamalai, Maamanduur and Kanchipuram are based on the Saivite and Vaishnavite mythology. The Puri Jagannath paintings are based on the Vaishnavite mythology Raja Ravivarma had this trend exemplified in his creations in the recent past, in Kerala. The Manuscript illustrations of the Jains, Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims again are based on the mythologies of the respective religions I cannot say definitely whether the Rajput painting and the Moghul paintings

are completely divested of the religious mythologies, though some exceptions are certainly found.

When modern painters, influenced by western models, made their mark, a disjunction is noticeable though thepersonages created have an Indian milieu and appearance. The Bengal School, especially Tagore, revived the folk tradition. When the influencing factors for creative arts including literature and painting are the same, the trends of developments will also be similar though not exact.

This has been the case in Europe where religious idealism, romanticism, realism, surrealism and to some extent cubism have parallels in literary themes. It is not to emphasise that all arts are one, but only to indicate the parallels which will help in outlining the weltanschaung of their development.

Painting of Karurthevar and RajaRaja Chola in Sri Birhadisvara temple, Thanjavur, District Thanjavur.

PAINTING IN TAMIL NADU

(From the Earliest Times to the Nayaks Period)

R.Nagasamy

I thank the Tamil University for giving me this opportunity to be with you this morning and present a historical survey of the paintings found in Tamil Nadu. I am sorry I couldn't make available the paper earlier for your benefit. I have brought some slides to illustrate my talk. Unfortunately I was not able to collect all the available slides as I had to hurry up to accompany a distinguished visitor, the president of the European Economic Commission. For the past two days, I have had no access to my office. Pardon me for that. Now before I present my paper, I would like to present one important view to this august audience.

Recently a great exhibition was organised in Paris on science and art. One of the important sections dealt with the pre-historic cave paintings from Lascaux in France. There they showed how, after the discovery of the pre-historic paintings, scientists tried to preserve them by the application of chemicals for posterity. For, during the past forty or fifty years, in spite of chemical preservation, it was demonstrated that visits by human beings who went to see these paintings had an adverse effect. Breathing by the human visitors leaves some species of germs which damage the paintings with the result that in France they had totally to prohibit visits by individuals who desired to see these outstanding paintings. Now, after seeing that exhibition, I have a feeling that we also should ban entry to the excellent paintings in the Great Temple of Tanjore and also at Cittanna-vaasal. Several thousand visitors going around daily and the putting on of lights of very powerful magnitude and the exposing of the paintings to outer lives would have a very serious effect. Already considerable damage has been caused to the great murals by visitors. You could see that a visitor has drawn with a sharp edged nail on outstanding Chola murals inside the Great Temple of Tanjore. There is a scratch. I am sure when you allow 40 or 50 students with one master to accompany them and with hardly one guard inside we find it very difficult to check vandalism. Surely we will be losing a great heritage, if this continues. The alternative is to make good reproductions and allow the visitors to see them. Of course experts are always most welcome to see these great paintings. The danger of our losing these magnificent paintings not only due to unchecked visits by crowds but also due to human vandalism is real and immediate. So this is only an appeal which the experts

could consider since we are at a very important seminar on painting. I thought I could put forth my view.

To give a brief summary of the paintings of Tamil Nadu, I would first of all like to draw your attention to the recent discoveries of pre-historic paintings in various parts of Tamil Nadu within the past one year. So far the earliest available paintings were those *from Kanchipuram* and Panamalai belonging to the Pallava age. But recently a teacher from Pondicherry noticed an important group of Megalithic paintings at a place called Keelavalai in South Arcot District about 15 Kms from Villupuram. These paintings are on rock shelters About 4 or 5 of them have been found.

Subsequently our Department, that is the Department of Archaeology of Tamil Nadu, conducted a survey of that region and discovered pre-historic paintings at another place called Settavarai about 25 Kms from Villupuram. These also presumably date from the Megalithic Period.

What must be considered as the mature phase of the Tamil painting was in the great temple of Thanjavur The temple, which was built under orders of Raja Raja Chola-I around *A.D 1010, is the largest temple* to have been built ever on Tamil soil. It is a perfect complex of architecture, sculpture, bronzes, paintings, music and dance. The name of the master builder who designed and constructed this grand temple is luckily preserved for us. His name, according to the epigraph is Raja Raja Peruntaccan(maha-taksha).

The paintings in the temple are found in the enclosure of a narrow space, running immediately around the innermost sanctum. Here two layers of paintings are available The earliest is coeval with the temple and *the other is a painting of the Thanjavur* Nayakas (around A.D.1600). The Nayaka paintings were found covering the Chola paintings. Thanks to the chemists of the Archaeological Survey, the outer layers have been carefully removed and the Chola paintings have been exposed. The Chola and the Nayaka paintings are poles apart and present an interesting contrast. The Chola paintings are found on the southern wall, the two wings of the western wall and also the northern wall.

On the southern wall is the painted *figure of Shiva as Dakshinamurthi*, seated under a banyan tree with several branches Shiva's head is faintly visible, with the red matted lock tied around the head. On the branches are shown monkeys, the langours and the baboons freely sporting. A white forceful boar is shown on one side. A little to the left of the tree are shown a Bhairava with a dog and a hero in adoration.

In the Srirangam temple complex there is a small temple, dedicated to Venugopala, built in the reign of Hoysala Veera Ramanatha in A.D.1220. The temple is a Hoysala structure in the heart of the Tamil country. On the ceiling of the entrance mandapa can be seen paintings depicting Venugopala playing on flute. The birds and quadrupeds stand still, absorbed by the music. Bordering the central panel are figure of Krishna and gopis in various poses. The figure of Krishna,his head-dress and *also the garments, closely follow the Hoysala* idiom. The gopis by their side Kondais and sarees, anticipate the still later Lepakshi style. It is not unlikely that the Venugopala

paintings belong to the end of the thirteenth century A.D

By far the majority of the surviving mural paintings belong to the Vijayanagara period and their Viceroys, the Nayakas. The mature Vijayanagara painting of the age of Krishnadeva Raya is in Thiruvannamalai. The tallest south gopura of the above temple was built under orders of Krishnadeva Raya. On the ceiling of the gopura is painted an elephant with soldiers running after it. The painting occupies a considerable part of the central square and is a fairly big panel. In a mandapa in the temple, paintings resembling very much the painting of the Virupaksha temple at Hampi, are to be seen. Unfortunately they are completely soot-laden. A mandapa at the back of the hall, now called *Eluttumandapa*, carries extensive paintings of the same period. These paintings show the conical cap of the Vijayanagara age, sharp features, prominent buttocks and closely tucked in under-garments.

Krishnadeva Raya was succeeded by Achyutadeva Raya, under whom some paintings were done on the walls of the Varadaraja temple at Kanchipuram. The paintings show in panels 108 divyadesas of the Vaishnava school. At Thiruvellarai near Srirangam, the story of Ramayana is painted, of which the Kishkinda panel is fairly well preserved. The figures have elongated forms, and even the monkeys are shown with the long conical Vijayanagara cap. The women portrayed are proto-types of the Lepakshi maidens.

Our Department has identified over 50 temples where mural paintings were found. These paintings of the 17th century are interesting in their own way and in many places we get the name of the artist as son of so and so. From the 17th and 18th century onwards we get information about artists from mural paintings. I would only conclude by saying that we have two more schools which have to be taken into consideration by art historions, particularly by those writing the history of the Tamil paintings.

The Sethupathy School at Ramanathapuram which was established as the capital of the Sethupath is around 1600. They have left extensive paintings at the Ramalinga Vilasam now under the control of the State Department of Archaeology. Here one can see paintings depicting the entire life of Muthu Vijaya Raghunatha Sethupathi who ruled around 1720-1725. His portraits are seen, and we also have a contemporary historical scene depicting Vijaya Ranga Chokkanatha Sethupathy. Portraits of several important personalities who adorned his court are also on view. Their names are inscribed. We have paintings executed not only by the Tamil artists but also by the Telugu artists. Several of the labels are also in Telugu.

Near Ramanathapuram, there is Uthara Kosamangai where we have paintings, also of the same Sethupathy School. Those who are interested in the Kalamkari style identify these figures with the Telugu prototypes belongings to the 17th and 18th centuries. Lastly, I am sure, we have a researcher here who is going to present his paper on the Maratha School. So I am not going to deal with the Maratha painting. But I wish to mention one thing: recently, at the Darbar hall, which was the audience hall of the Maratha rulers at Tanjore in the palace

complex, the TamilNadu Department of Archaeology has exposed the outer layer of paintings and brought to light the earliest phase of the Maratha School. There we see clearly the influence of the Moghul as well as the Deccani traditions. Later, when the Marathas got domiciled in Tanjore, they imbibed more of the Telugu tradition and we begin to see the tender lovely Moghul style figures replaced by the heavy plump figures of the Telugu tradition.

Brihadisvara temple - Main Shrine Chamber No. 1 west wall, 2nd row 1st Panel, Nayak layer of Paintings 16th - 17th century A.D. Thanjavur, District Thanjavur.

A Historical Survey II

PAINTING IN TAMIL NADU

(From the Nayaks to the 19th Century)

N. Harinarayana

Any historical survey of painting in Tamil Nadu must hark back to the murals of the Pandyas and the Cholas at Cittannavaasal and Thanjavur and pay its meed of praise to these great rulers for the glorious start they gave this art and the high standards they set. The Vijayanagar monarchs who came after them could not match them for that high quality in art, but made significant contribution to art through large scale construction of temples or renovation and extension of existing ones and through decorating them with sculpture and paintings. On the decline of the Vijayanagar-Empire, the Nayaks who had been the viceroys of the Empire emerged as rulers in their own right at Madurai, Tanjore and Ginji and carried forward the rich art traditions of the great Empire.

The Nayak rule might have been less powerful and more localised than that of the great Empire, but their patronage of art was not less magnificent. They systematically dotted the country they ruled with temples new or renovated and decorated them extensively with sculpture and painting. Such has been the sheer magnitude of their contribution to sculpture and architecture in Tamil Nadu that it evokes popular appreciation and has drawn critical attention

In the time of the Maratha kings who came to power at Tanjore in the 17th century after the Nayaks, painting in other media came into vogue through the impact of art forms from the Deccan and from the West. These new types of painting had their own distinctive stamp and showed the genius of the artist of Tamil Nadu to take over new media and new technique and create distinct schools of painting which flourished till the end of the 19th century when the impact of traditional styles declined and the Tamil artists found themselves into the mainstream of modern art.

It must also be stated that painting in Tamil Nadu has been less studied and less written about. It may be because whatever there is of ancient painting in Tamil Nadu has been adequately studied and what is extant of ancient painting is not very much. The bulk of the painting which is available belongs to the period of the Nayaks and the time thereafter, and tends to be considered recent and thus not ancient enough to merit critical attention. A result of such an attitude

has been that the paintings themselves have not been taken care of sufficiently in most places where they are found. It is evident that there is already a change in this approach, and it would not be long before that they are studied carefully and preserved well as works of art with their own period flavours.

A look at the Nayak paintings shows that they have followed in the footsteps of their Vijayanagar forbears. It is interesting to note that the Vijayanagar artists themselves had broken away from the art forms of the Pallavas and the Cholas in painting. This is evident from a study of the Vijayanagar paintings at Lepakshi, Somapalayam, Anagundi, Thiruparuthikundram etc. The changes which the Hoysalas had introduced seemed to have influenced the vijayanagar artists also. Gone are the full figures, the slanting eyes, the regular noses, the subtle modelling which were a legacy of the artists of Ajanta, Cittannavaasal, Panamalai etc. Profiles came into favour with the Vijayanagar artists, and projecting eyes and less modelled figures were drawn by them. The line was still powerful and sure but the painting itself took on more of a folk idiom. Moreover, these artists used painting as a means of recounting stories from mythology for popular viewing. They even added labels as captions for the pictures they drew. It was almost as if a manuscript was unrolled on the wall for the visitors to see and read and get to know our myths. Pictures are always an easier way of narration and a more popular one, and so paintings in temples came to the fore for such purposes. In fact painting is easier to execute than carving in stone, and what had been done earlier in stone came to be done in painting and that too in colour which attracts and holds attention. If the paint fades, it is easier to re-do it and restore the painting to its original brightness. This was the raison d'etre of paintings on temple walls.

The Nayaks took over this tradition and used it widely. What was important was the narration of the story and perhaps there was no particular emphasis on striving for artistic effects. Still the artists achieved in places striking artistic effects as we could see by and by.

Nayak paintings which are found in temples at Thiruparuthikundram.Thanjavur, Thiruvarur, Chidambaram, Thiruvalanjuli have been studied and discussed adequately. Paintings of this period are however found in many other places also but these have not been much noticed. In her book on 'Thanjavur Paintings', Jaya Appasamy lists twenty two places in which such murals are found, some of the places being Punainallur, Thiruperunthurai, Pattiswaram, Pudukottai etc.

The earliest of the Nayak painting are in the Sangeetha Mandapam of the temple at Thiruparuthikundram. These are datable to the later part of the 17th century. These are paintings recounting stories from Jain books especially scenes from the life of Rishabhadeva, the first Thirthankara, of Vardhamana and of Neminatha, another Thirthankara. These are portrayed in a long series with elaborate labels painted in Tamil explaining each incident clearly. T.N. Ramachandran in his book 'Thiruparuthikundram and its Temples' has extensively dealt with all the paintings giving full details of their content. Scenes showing dancers

and musicians in innumerable charming poses, processions in honour of the Thirthankara and of the Samavasarana structure predominate, among them.

The Nayak paintings in the circumambulatory passage in the temple at Thanjavur may be said to be markedly different. One finds here depicted among others 'Indra on the elephant, Agni on a ram, Yama on a buffalo, Nirritti on a deer'. The Amrita-mandhanam scene in also shown with pictures of the objects that rose out of the ocean. The labels are absent, and the projecting eye is not much evident. There are also paintings of Sage Durvasa and a battle scene of charioteers. On the wall, facing north, Durga fighting with demons Sumbha and Nisumbha and others is shown as well as Vishnu gathering lotuses for an offering to Siva.

A series of paintings of the late 17th and early 18th century in the Saivite temple at Thiruvarur recount the legend of an early mythical Chola King Muchukunda, who is credited with having brought down from heaven the image of Thyagaraja in worship there. There are scenes showing the king going in procession to Indra amidst pomp and splendour, Indra testing him by showing him seven images of Thyagaraja, the King selecting the right one and being presented with all the images for consecration on earth. Muchukunda is also shown as worshipping Vishnu for obtaining his help. Festivals in the temple are also depicted.

The Chidambaram temple also contains paintings of the Nayak period on the ceiling in front of the shrine of Sivakamasundari and in the mandapa in front of the gopuram leading to the shrine of the goddess. At the former spot, there are paintings of the story of Bhikshatana and Mohini—Siva and Vishnu having taken these forms to test the Rishis and the Rishipatnis. In tune with the theme, the Bhikshatana of Siva as a fair handsome youth and the Mohini of Vishnu as a dusky, voluptuous, coy maiden, with her head for ever bent to the right, her eyes fixed on the floor, a diaphanous garment tantalisingly exposing her charms. The rishis are momentarily infatuated as infatuated can be--tall and thin, big and potbellied, all running to her to crave her favours. The Rishipatnis are no less excited by Bhikshatana, but hide their passion under cover of shyness and modesty. A series of paintings illustrate and elaborate this theme. There are other paintings illustrating stories from the Sivapurana, especially the lives of saints. A painting of Nataraja with Sivakamasundari in the Sabha is the highlight of paintings in the mandapa in front of the gopuram leading to the shrine of the goddess. The paintings in the Chidambaram temple were retouched recently.

The Nayak paintings in the Kapardisvara temple at Thiruvalanjuli, dated to the 17th century, are considered by Dr.Sivaramamurti to be "among the most important to illustrate the Nayak phase of art". The paintings are different from the general run of those of the Nayaks. More figures are shown with faces to the front rather than in profile. A great deal of fine decoration enriches the paintings. The figures of the deities as well as of the others such as saints, attendants are bejewelled more than ever, and certain striking prettiness pervades them all. There is vigorous movement in the dance of the Nataraja shown here. Bhikshatana, Rati-Manmatha, Vrishabharudha and Umasahita are the other themes depicted with the same artistic excellence.

There is an abundance of paintings in the Sri Ranganathaswamy temple at Srirangam scattered over different parts of this temple and attributable to a wide range of time from the 13th century onwards. The Nayak paintings are found in the corridors of the Thayar shrine, in the corridors round the sanctum sanctorum and in the Mukamandapa of the Udayavar shrine. Srirangam also contains Nayak paintings in the 'Yaali' murals on a gopura.

The corridors of the Thayar shrine are long and the high walls and the ceiling of these corridors are covered with paintings. The whole of the Vishnu Purana is narrated in painted panels with labels in Telugu, explaining the theme illustrated in each panel. Interspersed among these are portraits of the donors or patrons. One portrait is that of Vijayaranga Chokkanatha Nayak of Madurai (1706-1722 AD). But these paintings have suffered from neglect and are in a damaged condition. The painted layer has flaked off extensively.

The paintings in the corridors round the sanctum sanctorum depict the Sriranga Mahatmya and are in a better state of preservation except for a thick deposit of soot on some years ago. As the ceiling is at lower height then the one in the Thayar shrine and as the paintings are better preserved, one can see at once the skill of the Nayak artist.

The Udayavar shrine paintings deal with the life of the alvars and the acharyas of Vaishnavism. There are here paintings of Nammalvar, Udayavar, Manavalamahamuni, Thirumalisai alvar, Perialvar, Goda, Vipranarayana etc.

The Meenakshi Sundaresvara temple at Madurai is so much admired for its architecture and sculpture that the paintings in it are not much taken note of. Yet on two long walls around the Golden Lotus Tank inside the temple, there is a wealth of paintings. In fact till a few years back, they were hidden under painted wooden panels said to have been put up in 1896. When these panels were removed, the nearly 100 metre length of the northern and eastern walls were found to be covered with mural paintings depicting the Thiruvilayadal of Siva. These are divided into thirty six panels, each nearly 3 metres long and 2 metres wide. Each panel is separated from another by a dark border about 2.5 cm wide. The paintings have been extensively damaged and have peeled off badly. But, where they survive, some of them are exquisite, such as the one depicting Meenakshi Kalyanam. A bright blue which has been used for certain figures in these paintings has a striking quality about it. In the Sadai Alambar Mandapam near the tank itself, there is another set of paintings on a ceiling. The central panel here depicts Meenakshi Kalyanam. It is in this painting that portraits of Dalavai Ramappa and Mangamma are shown. The names of Queen Mangamma and Ramappa are found written in Telugu and Tamil. Around this central panel, there are portraits depicting the battles fought by Minakshi with the deities of the directions and the coronation of Minakshi herself. In the cornices below the ceiling, figures of Yaalis and elephants in white against a blue background are painted. Below these animal figures, there are 23 small painted panels showing Thiruvilayadal The paintings in the Madurai Meenakshi Sundareswara temple were retouched recently.

There are Nayak paintings in the bigger, better-known temples and done on an extensive scale. In innumerable other temples, there are Nayak paintings such as those at Kumbakonam, Chengam, Thiruvotriyur, Pattiswaram etc. But one thing is evident; as time went on, there was not only a fall in aesthetic quality in the art of mural painting but a decline in the technique of painting also. What Dr.Paramasivam, after extensive studies of painting technique, said of Chola and Vijayanagar paintings - 'The five centuries that separate the Chola art from the Vijayanagar art mark a period when slow decadence set in not only over the art of painting, but also in the technique of the process of painting' - holds good also for the Nayak murals. Less than usual care seems to have been taken in executing them, so that they have flaked off extensively in most places. Neglect added to the damage. Yet a Bikshatana at Tiruvarur and a Nataraja at Thiruvalanjuli are reason enough to make us seek out more of Nayak paintings and preserve them.

Painting till the Nayak times was almost confined to mural paintings. There was little of painting on other surfaces such as paper , wood, cloth etc. This changed when the Marathas took over Tanjore in 1675. They added a new stream of culture which itself had been in contact with the cultures of the North. As Jaya Appasamy observes, 'The Maharastrians, besides bringing their own culture from their homelands, functioned as a bridge over which ideas and techniques from farther north flowed southwards'. It was also at this time that the British were active in the South, engaging themselves briskly in trade in general or aligning themselves with one or the other of the powers in the South as occasion demanded. There were also other European powers like the French, the Dutch and the Danish. Christian missionaries also came and established contacts with people.

The result was the use of a completely new series of media; such as cloth on wood, glass,mica,ivory etc. Subjects also came to be changed from the purely religious to the secular. It is in Tanjore, under the patronage of the Marathas, that the new school of painting came to be developed and has been called the Tanjore school.

It was in the late 18th century that this happened. The Tanjore paintings, which are done over cloth stretched on wooden panels, have their distinct identity. The technique lent itself to giving an impasto effect to the painting. This was enhanced further by the use of glass and gems and gold leaf to encrust the painting for decorative effect. In these paintings, the main figure was shown bigger in size than the others to emphasise its importance. Thus in the commonly - known Navneethakrishna painting, the baby Krishna is shown much larger than Yasoda. Some of the Tanjore paintings have an exquisite appeal. The use of bright colours against contrasting backgrounds makes for an arresting effect. The painting of Mahishasura Mardini in the National Art Gallery (Madras Museum) at Madras has a dark red background, against which the figure of the goddess in gold leaf emerges prominently.The chandeliers and drapery in the background reveal the impact of Western ideas. Big Tanjore paintings, even upto 3 feet in height are known. These paintings became popular as icons for worship. While religious themes, especially figures of gods and goddesses predominated in these paintings, secular subjects such as portraits of kings and queens and noblemen were also drawn.

Wood was only one of the media used by the Tanjore artists. The contacts with foreign merchants also brought them into

touch with Western art media such as glass. There came to be a demand for such paintings, and artists came forth to meet the demand. One of the media was glass. Painting on glass, especially when one has to see the picture through the glass, makes it a difficult one to make. But when the Tanjore artist found that such painting was much sought after, with his undoubted capacity for adaptation to new forms and techniques, mastered it soon brought out some exquisite works. Since this technique is said to have come to this part of the country through Chinese contacts, there is a lingering influence of Chinese art in some of them. As a result, in such paintings with marked foreign influence, the clear line for which the Indian artist is famous had given way to soft outlines. An example is the portrait of a court dancer, where the dress and the jewellery have an exotic flavour. In another portrait of a Moghul nobleman, painted in tones of Chinese red and a sombre grey, there is an absence of strong enclosing lines characteristic of Indian art. In the collection of the Madras Museum, there are also exquisite examples of paintings on glass. One interesting painting is that of a deified royal figure all cloth in velvet and with drapery behind, carrying the attributes of a god with four hands. This is a strange combination which still makes a striking painting. Another painting, 'Portrait of a Musician', shows the fondess of the Tanjore artist for round faces and plump figures.

The Tanjore artists used also other media such as ivory and mica. Such paintings were the direct result of following Western examples. These paintings were done from about 1790, mostly in miniature and consisted mainly of portraits of queens, kings and noblemen. They were done with delicacy of touch and are charming pieces. Religious subjects were also drawn, and the Government Museum, Madras has a few such ivory paintings depicting Krishna.

Mica was an unusual medium used for paintings. These are quite small, and 'the ground is generally transparent or bare and the colours opaque and loud and intempera'. The Government Museum,Madras has a set of them representing deities like Vayu and Durga. These paintings in ivory and mica were good as mementoes or souvenirs and were in popular demand in the 19th century.

Painted textiles came also into vogue during the 19th century; they were called 'Kalamkari' pieces and were originally derived from the Andhra area. Kalamkari was, and is, produced in two ways, with the use of blocks and the rough freehand drawing. The Kalamkari fabrics were used for temple hangings and carried mythological stories. Vegetable colours were used to paint them. They also had labels in Tamil or Telugu recounting the stories represented.

The end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century was a time when a number of British artists visited the country to make portraits,landscapes, scenes of every day life etc., in oil or engravings. Some of the well known names among them were the Daniells (Thomas and William Daniell), Tilly Kettle, John Zoffany and George Chinnery. John Smart, one of the greatest of English miniaturists worked in awhile and popularised his art. The works they did, especially the ones on large canvas, were left behind. Their painting served to inspire the local artists to take to these new techniques. A large number of portraits came to be made of even Indian

subjects. One unique feature was that the artists turned away from the conventional stylisation of old and endeavoured to depict the men and women portrayed in the way they were seen. One portrait of Venkaji (1765-1784) in the Saraswati Mahal Library, described by Jaya Appasamy, shows the king in informal dress. The portraits of the Pudukkottai kings, done by British artists and Ravi Varma, signify the firm hold these new techniques were taking in the country.

The long undisputed reign of the mural art with its religious base was almost at an end by the close of the 19th century. Ravi Varma's paintings in oil on canvas had opened new vistas of art with different ideals and purposes. By the turn of this century, the age of modern painting had begun in Tamil Nadu.

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THE PRESENT PHASE

A.S.Raman

ART is like handwriting. It reveals the character of an individual or a nation. When an Indian artist imitates the style of another belonging to a different ethos, however competently, he can only end up as a forgerer. He says nothing worthwhile through his work which only reflects the character, temperament and personality of the artist he admires. It is therefore imperative that an artist should express himself through his own language, however inadequate or obsolete it may be. Fashion is no substitute for faith and it is only from faith that genuinely creative art emerges. As Oscar Wilde has said, fashion is so ugly that one is happy to see it change fast, However when a serious and responsible artist finds the visual language of another country suitable to his taste, temperament and technique and adapts it, he is not imitative. For basically he expresses the ethos of his own country rather than that of another. He cannot escape from it. Thus there is more of Spain than of Africa in a Picasso version of an African mask or statue, more of France than of India in a Matisse interpretation of a Kangra miniature and more of India than of France in a Gauguinesque composition by Amrita Sher-Gil

In the south, particularly in TamilNadu the emphasis happily is still not on imitation or adaptation, but on creative conformity strengthened and sustained by values which are perennially relevant. The present generation of Tamil artists are understandably keen on expressing themselves in the modern idiom. But they are also aware that no modern idiom is relevant or durable unless it is integrated into tradition. That is why one finds a rationalebehind the avant-garde in Tamil Nadu where there is a healthy resistance to wild adventurism. Here the damage that militant, Western-style modernism causes is minimal. There is no full stop in art. No finality. It is essentially a tentative but continuous process constantly renewing itself. Even such a fiercely committed highpriest of modern art as Clement Greenberg says: 'Art is, among many other things, continuity. Without the past of art, and without the need and compulsion to maintain past standards of excellence, such a thing as modern art would be impossible'.

At the turn of the present century there was no such thing as Indian art. The west was very much with us partly directly via inferior

British artists and partly indirectly via Ravi Varma whose creations were more western than Indian though he managed to dress them up deceptively in Indian costumes. A strong reaction seemed inevitable and soon it came in the form of a spirited revivalist movement with its base in Calcutta paradoxically under the leadership of an Englishman, EB Havell who was ably assisted by Abanindranath Tagore and others. They made a fervent plea for the Indian artist's return to the traditional Indian norms and forms, totally rejecting the alien Royal Academy style classicism. Soon the movement spread throughout the country and acquired the thrust of a national upsurge. In fact the revivalist agitation was the cultural counterpart of the freedom struggle. Almost all Indian artists irrespective of their backgrounds rallied round Havell and Abanindranath Tagore and began to explore the possiblities of popularising the methods and techniques used by the masters who painted the Ajanta frescoes and Moghul and Rajput miniatures. Artists trained by Abanindranath Tagore and Nandalal Bose began to teach students in different parts of the country thus preparing the ground for the emergence of the Bengal School which for many decades remained not only a symbol of national identity but a synonym for modern art Indian style. For a long time art taught or practised outside the Bengal School was considered irrelevant to the Indian situation and sensibility. The Bengal School of course had its exponents in the south also. At Machilipatnam in Andhra, Promotesh Chaudhury was the mentor of a number of students of the National College who tried to paint in Ajanta style. At Bangalore Venkatappa represented the Bengal School and at Trivandrum, Madhava Menon.

There is little evidence to suggest that the Bengal School type of revivalism, which tried to return to the mere externals of traditional art rather than to the spirit behind it, had any impact on the artists of TamilNadu, though Devi prasad Roy Chowdhuri, the first Indian principal of the Government School (now College) of Arts and Crafts in Madras, drew his early inspiration from his teacher, Abanindranath Tagore, and other stalwarts of the revivalist movement. In fact Chowdhuri broke away from the Bengal School in his search for a personal idiom. He was too independent and innovative to observe the rules of the game within the orbit of the Bengal School which he found too soft and suave for his temperament. He had no interest in the Bengal School because he had no interest in shortcuts to the Indian style. As the head of South India's leading and India's oldest art school for nearly three decades he was a major influence on the art scene in Madras. The institution over which he presided has, over the years, acquired immense prestige because of his association with it. As a teacher, he laid equal stress on freedom and discipline, freedom to experiment and explore, to innovate and investigate, and discipline in order to be able to work within the accepted format of universally valid norms and standards. He firmly believed that modern art was a severe discipline. It is this discipline that separates the art of children and chimpanzees from paintings by Klee and Kandinsky. Under Chowdhuri's charismatic impact, his students learnt where to stop in their pursuit of new forms and idioms, without going back to the tired mannerisms of the East or the West. They now knew how to relate the modern idiom to their personal vision and technique without alienating themselves from their own

heritage. So to Chowdhuri goes the credit for the discipline and decorum with which the artists of TamilNadu express themselves in the modern idiom. In their works there is a sensuous and self-sustaining rhythm and harmony. If even today Madras remains sane and serene under the impact of the avalanche of styles and techniques from Europe and America, the reason is the healthy influence of the College of Arts and Crafts which has well-tested traditions to preserve.

After Chowdhuri's retirement in 1957, his student, KCS Paniker, became the principal. Earlier he had worked as Vice-Principal for two years. For 10 years he made his presence felt on the contemporary art scene in a big way. He was personally responsible for the birth of Cholamandal, a unique experiment in a Utopia that works, an exclusive artists settlement based on the principles of liberty, equality and fratenity. It is half way between Madras and Mamallapuram. Paniker encouraged his students to rediscover traditional forms and symbols, not for imitation or adaptation, but for reinterpretation in the virile contemporary idiom. Tantric signs and symbols became the new vocabulary for artists who accepted his leadership. They were able to impart a new flavour and accent to their work which was now Indian without being derivative and modern without being contrived or irrelevant. There was a breath of fresh air, thanks to the efforts of Paniker who was committed to the genuine revival of the Indian vocabulary and imagery.

The most dominant influences on the art of the Tamils, particularly in the post-independance years, thus were non-Tamils: Chowdhuri and Paniker.

The artists who are now active today in TamilNadu have drawn their inspiration directly or indirectly either from Chowdhuri or from Paniker. It would be invidious to single out some for special mention and leave out the rest. There are so many good artists today and it would be difficult to name them. What they have in common is a combination of factors without which creative art within the four walls of tradition is not possible. For example, their strength lies in their sound technique for which the Madras College of Arts and Crafts is deservedly famous. They have a mastery over the grammar of painting and this explains the structural firmness of their compositions which have no loose ends. Their drawing is forceful and fluent and their palette is warm and sensuous. Abstraction interests them but only to a limited extent. More as an exercise in colours and forms than as an end in itself. Their motifs come from temples, festivals, rituals and folk arts and crafts which give one an insight into the cultural milieu in TamilNadu. The general tone and temper of their compositions are soothing because the artists are free from the sort of tensions that highly subjective and self-conscious modernists have to endure. If you want to see modern art that is Indian and intelligible, you should go to Madras.

The artists of South India in general and of TamilNadu in particular are not happy for want of recognition commensurate with the quality of their work. They have a feeling of denial of their legitimate share in the national cake. It is complained that the Lalit Kala Akademi does not seem to give them a fair deal. Paniker always championed the cause of the Tamil artists, even at the risk of being misunderstood as overplaying his Big Brother's role, with the result that there was little improvement in the situation.

The Tamil and other South Indian artists have yet to make an impact on the All-India scene for no fault of theirs. For example, in the whole of South India, there are only two Fellows of the Lalit Kala Akademi while just one city, Bombay, has seven and Delhi more. As for the art purchases for the National Gallery of Modern Art in New Delhi and other institutions and monographs on individual artists being brought out by the Lalit Kala Akademi the Tamil artists are under- represented One cannot blame anybody The system is such. Decisions are taken on the basis of the majority vote. So four states against the rest of India are bound to remain bypassed, unless they make a big noise.

The TamilNadu Government's generous offer of one acre of land as free gift and contribution of 50% towards the cost of construction facilitated the establishment of the Regional Centre of the Lalit Kala Akademi in Madras in 1978 and it was a very happy event. In six years it has developed into a most effective forum for artists of South India who have begun to identify themselves with it totally. With their continued good will and cooperation the Centre can be expected to have smooth sailing and complete the tasks assigned to it well ahead of schedule. It has so far organised a number of workshops, exhibitions, lecture demonstrations, seminars and conferences which have gone a long way towards bringing the artists and the public closer together. The Centre with its resources and infrastructure is best equipped to offer whatever advice and assistance the artists need. As a Regional Centre, controlled by the Central Akademi in Delhi it has no doubt its limitations. But the policy to decentralise the work of the parent body implies sufficient autonomy for regional centres which are expected to play a big role in stimulating art activities at state level.

Earlier --in 1975 -- the Government of TamilNadu set up a State Akademi called TamilNadu Oviam Nunkalai Kuzhu with a view to giving an impetus to art activities through exhibitions, publications, seminars, conferences, artist camps, purchases of paintings, sculptures, etc., inter-state and inter-district cultural exchanges, fellowships to eminent artists, subsidies to one man shows, orientation courses to art teachers and so on. The Kuzhu also sponsors exhibitions by foreign artists who visit TamilNadu under the cultural exchange programme of the Government of India. The Kuzhu and the Regional Centre sometimes organise programmes jointly.

In the city of Madras there are several artist groups actively engaged in the implementation of their own programmes. Cholamandal has one of the better organised groups. It is known as Artists' Handicrafts Association Cholamandal is on the tourist map of Madras. Naturally the artists here have steady custom They have a permanent art gallery and an open air theatre. They organise a seven day cultural festival each year to stimulate inter-disciplinary integration.

The Progressive Painters' Association, started by Paniker has its office at Cholamandal It organises (1) group shows of members outside Madras such as Bombay, Delhi, Bangalore and other cities, (2) annual art shows for members and (3) exhibitions of national importance such as the one entitled 'Contemporary Paintings in Miniature Format'. It acquires works of art by members for its permanent collection. It publishes an art journal, ARTRENDS. It sets

up snack bars and arranges for group discussions and lectures. It screens films on art. It maintains a good library

The South Indian Society of Painters is another important organization engaged in more or less the same type of activities as the Progressive Painters' Association.

The Madras Art Club, established in 1958, comprises Sunday painters, that is, painters who are non professionals drawn from different walks of life. It conducts regular evening classes on art on....Wednesdays and Fridays with the assistance of professors from the College of Arts and Crafts. It meets on Sundays too Demonstrations by well-known painters are held at regular intervals. On the spot sketching is encouraged during outdoor painting excursions. It organises film shows for its members and their guests in collaboration with Alliance Francaise and Max Muller Bhavan Though amateurs, its members have succesfully competed with professionals and won many awards at prestigious All-India exhibitions

At Pallavaram a group of 50 artists have formed 'The Association of Young Painters and Sculptors' which *regularly puts up* annual and other shows in Tamilnadu and outside. It sponsors candidates for specialised training in print-making at Garhi work-shops in Delhi, managed by the Lalit Kala Akademi

Loyola Art Club is meant for the art students of the Loyola college. They meet on Friday evenings to sketch or do clay-modelling under the guidance of a trained artist Well-known artists are often invited to hold lecture demonstrations One of the Club's most imaginative programmes *concerns school children* who enter a competition each year for on the spot painting. The prize-winning as well as other entries are exhibited at the college and the press and the public are persuaded to take a look at them.

At the district level also there are many *active art organisations*. At Tiruchirapalli, for example, there are two (1)Contemporary Art Centre and (2) United Painters' Association At Vellore also there are two : (1) North Arcot Artists' Association and (2) North Arcot District Art Centre. Madurai has its Madurai Artists' Group, Kanchipuram its Tamilnadu Arts and Crafts Improvement Association and Coimbatore its Chitrakala Academy. They all have identical programmes designed (1) to encourage the teaching, practice and appreciation of art, (2) to secure for art and artists maximum exposure and (3) to help the State and Central Akademies in the implementation of general programmes. All these organisations are well patronised by their members who have evidently a sense of commitment to excellence in art

Unfortunately there are no commercial galleries worth the name in TamilNadu. The result is that the practising artists have to depend on art dealers outside the State for the sponsorship of their shows. There is only one commercial gallery in Madras ...Sarala Art Centre which does not seem to have the resources for promoting artists with professional thoroughness The Kalayatra, another commercial enterprise, is organisationally sound and artistically progressive. But since it is a mobile exhibition comprising works by specially invited artists, it can be of little use to young, unknown and highly talented artists At present the main sources of art patronage are government or semi-government organisations such as museums, galleries, Akademies and public sector

undertakings. To a small extent foreigners, i.e., diplomats, tourists and business men also buy contemporary Indian paintings, sculptures and graphics.

What are the facilities in TamilNadu for training in art? The State has two first - rate government run art colleges in Madras and Kumbakonam. In addition there are two very good institutions which deserve special mention; (1) Kalakshetra, at Thiruvanmiyur and (2) the Tamilnadu College Architecture and Sculpture at Mamallapuram. Kalakshetra is popularly known only for its faculties of music and dance. It has also a very good department of painting under the stewardship of one of the seniormost painters in the country, K.Sreenivasulu. It offers a 4 year diploma course. At Kalakshetra the students are trained only in traditional methods and techniques. There is no Western - style modelling or on the spot sketching. Revival of lost or neglected forms and designs is the primary objective here.

At Mamallapuram also it is the same approach. It is a unique institution in the sense that it imparts training exclusively in different branches of temple arts and crafts. It offers a 4 year diploma course and there is a wide range of subjects to choose from: (1) Temple Architecture, (2) Stone Sculpture, (3)Sudhai Sculpture, (4) Metal Sculpture, (5) Wood Sculpture and (6) Traditional Painting. Affiliated to the University of Madras, it also offers a 3 year degree course in Temple Architecture. A well-known authority on the temple arts, V.Ganapathi Sthapathi, is the head of the institution. There is no problem of placement for the sculptors and architects who pass out of the Mamallapuram Institute because demand is more than supply. Their services are required not only in different parts of the country but in other countries too, such as the USA, Malaysia, Singapore, SriLanka and Mauritius.

Many Tamil artists who work abroad or in other States within the country have distinguished themselves as competent exponents of modern art with a relevance to the Indian context. Viswanathan in Paris, R.Sarangan in Delhi and J.Swaminathan at Bhopal, among many others, have enriched their Indian sensibility by assimilating the modern idiom.

Jain temple (vardhamana) Detail paintings on ceiling in outer hall. Tiruparutikunram. District Chingleput.

THE PRE–HISTORIC BEGINNINGS

K.V.Raman

What is generally called the pre historic is often termed Pre-Sangam in the context of Tamilnadu, as the Sangam literature is the earliest literary record available. The evidence regarding pre historic paintings has been slowly accu mulating in India. There are two sources of our knowledge on this subject:

(1) on the pottery of the pre and proto historic periods as revealed in archa eological excavations; and

(2) the paintings found in the dark recesses of the caves and rock shelters in the hilly tracts

1.PAINTED POTTERIES:

The evidence from the first category is extremely meagre in Tamilnadu.The ear liest pottery identified by the archaeologist here, as indeed in the whole of South India, is Burnished Grey ware widely used by the Neolithic folk in the second millennium B.C. None of them was painted, though we find some tinges of red ochre on the lips of the vessels. This is usually considered the period of settled life, agriculture, etc. The limited availability or near absence of paintings of their pottery of the Neolithic folk here and also other sites of Karnataka is in contrast to the tradition of the Indus Valley pottery (also of the same period) which is predominantly painted in rich colours and different patterns. The paintings include even narrative panels.

As pointed out by the Allchins, 'the early painted ware of the southern Neolithic pottery are too fragmentary to say much about their design. We see purple paint on a red or brown burnished slip, simple linear patterns, triangles radiating from the neck of the vessel and wavy lines'[1] In the Neolithic pottery of Tamilnadu, limited as it is, no traces of paintings have been found.

Even in the next cultural period viz. the Iron Age, we find the tradition of painted pottery not strong or persistent. In fact, the whole Black and Red pottery which was the mainstay of the Iron Age pottery of South India is unpainted. Only occasionally, as at Adichanallur, we find white paintings, that too some oblique strokes or dotted lines. No figures human or animal, have been found amongst them. The Russet coated black and red ware which flourished in TamilNadu

1 Bridget and Raymond Allchin The Birth of Indian Civilization, 1968-p.301

Andhra and Mysore around the turn of the Christian era preserved a range of simple linear and wavy designs made of kaolin. But here too figures or geometrical or natural designs are conspicuous by their absence. On the whole, in the field of painting tradition, as indeed the ceramic traditioin, in fabric, texture variety and motifs, the southern pottery from the earliest times to the historical period, was entirely different from the Indus valley pottery.

2.ROCK PAINTINGS:

The importance of rock paintings in the study of pre-historic art is gaining ground. But until a few decades ago the evidence was extremely meagre. But considerable addition to our knowledge on the subject has come up in recent years. There seems to be a large concentration of rock paintings in the hilly tracts of Madhya-Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Orissa, Andhra, Karnataka and Kerala. Though TamilNadu is very rich in pre historic sites, we had very little information regarding the pre historic paintings here. The first discovery of rock paintings was made by the Department of Ancient History and Archaeology, University of Madras, in 1978 at a place called Mallapadi in Dharmapuri district. This was soon followed by the discovery of extensive and interesting rock paintings in Kilvalai, South Arcot District in 1982. These have helped to placeTamilNadu on the map of prehistoric paintings in India.

MALLAPADI PAINTINGS

Mallapadi is a village near Bargur on the Madras- Krishnagiri- Bangalore Highway. The paintings are found inside a shallow rock shelter on the slopes of a bald rocky hill at Mallapadi. The paintings have been found on the ceilings of the rock shelter. They have been executed in light yellow or white kaolin. There are four figures of which a horse group seems to depict a fighting or hunting scene. Two persons mounted on horses are confronting each other as if engaged in a fight. They are holding the horse reins with one hand and a long pole or lance in the other. The poles cross each other indicating an encounter. The horses and the human figures are rather stylised

In the same rock-space a little away from the horse group is seen a primitive man of medium height brandishing a sword or a weapon with both the hands raised as if to strike. He is wearing a thick bushy dress on his waist. Another figure shown separately is an animal which may be identified as a bull, considering its two horns, a hump and a long tail.[2]

KILVALAI PAINTINGS

Kilvalai, a small village in the Villu puram taluk of South Arcot district, is on the (direct) road from Villupuram to Tirukkalur. To the South of Kilvalai there are a number of hills with natural caverns and crevices of which three contain a large number of rock paintings. They are executed in red ochre on the ceilings of the caves as well as on the sides of the facade and in narrow crevices. The following themes are depicted in them. (In addition there are marked men and women in a boat.)

1. One group of tribals in which a man, probably the leader, riding on a short horse

2.See K V Raman, 'Ancient Cave Paintings in Tamil Nadu' in Man and Environment, V-1981.

and being escorted by a group of four men hand in hand. The leader is sitting majes tically astride the horse holding his hands akimbo. The escorting persons standing in a row in front wear short skirts around their waist which fall up to the knee.

Some of the figures have decorative horn like marks on their heads. A smaller group of persons seem to perform a group tribal dance in front of the leader. But in this group are seen some symbols painted in a jumble without any order or sequence. Three motifs or symbols are seen: the wheel the corn and the cross lines. No other symbol is to be seen in this group. They seem to have been painted at random at different times as a mark of some ritualistic belief

2. Another group of paintings clearly depicts a wheeled cart or a primitive chariot drawn by a horse, facing a group of persons who have weapons like the shield. It is probably a fighting scene or one depicting a chariot being waylaid by armed men. The human figures are drawn in thick lines and the torso comprises two triangles one over the other-the lower forming the lower body and the other upper. The hands are thickly hatched.

3. The third group: A few human figures are seen standing without any action. A bow and arrow is also seen

4. The fourth group consists of a few symbols apparently arranged in one row giving the appearance of pictographic writing.

Here also, a little away, is seen the wheel. To me they do not appear to be picto-graphic writing but can be compared to the graffiti marks seen in the Chalcolithic and Megalithic pottery. In some of the Megalithic pottery such a combination of the symbols or graffiti is seen in a row and they are considered to indicate the particular group or the tribe. Here we can see that they have drawn the wheel, the spike and the trident which formed part of their iron weaponry. Some of the symbols might have served as prototypes for the symbols like the Sun, *Ujjani symbol* and the like found in the punch marked coins which are thought to be tribal coins[3]. Some of the symbols occur in the Indus writings.

GENERAL FEATURES

Two motifs predominate in these paintings:- the wheel and the horse. The presence of the horse-rider both at Malla padi and Kilvalai and the presence of wheeled cart at the latter place and the frequent recurrence of the wheel among the symbols would clearly indicate a society very conscious of their importance. They were probably the prized possessions of the times. The presence of horse motifs in the paintings is considered as compara tively later. But this motif of horse and horse-riders has been discovered from several sites in Madhya Pradesh, like Bhimbetka, Kharwai, Adamgarh, etc. In South India the granite rocks of North Karnataka and Andhra provided suitable protected surfaces forrock art such as Kupgal, Maski.

According to Allchin most of them can be attributed to the Neolithic people who settled on these hills. But the presence of horse motif in paintings is regarded as comparatively late. H.D. Sankalia states that the forest and cave

3 D D Kosambi, The Culture and Civilization of Ancient India, P.129

dwellers were not familiar with the horse much before 4th century B.C. This was because the horse itself became a part of the Indian life comparatively late. The circumstantial evidence also seems to be in favour of identifying the paintings to the late Neolithic or Iron Age. Exploration has revealed the vestiges of the Megalithic people in the form of their burials and pottery in the vicinity. Two Kms. east of Kilvalai in the village Udaiyanattam megalithic burials including the anthromorphic stone figure of a Mother Goddess have been discovered, Cairn circles and port holed cists have been found. At Mallapadi Megalithic pottery is found profusely. Also a limited number of Neolithic celts. The rock paintings at Mallapadi seem to have close stylistic resemblance to the Karnataka group of paintings, particularly the horned bull and armed human beings. The presence of the horse, though it can be traced back to the late Neolithic times, would argue for a Megalithic context especially when we see the tracings shown at Mallapadi. Another important factor to remember is the presence of horse bits in the Megalithic burials along with the other iron implements. This would again show the importance given to the possession of the horse by the Megalithic folk.

So, in the present circumstances, the newly discovered rock paintings of TamilNadu are datable to the later phase of the Southern Neolithic or the Iron Age, the latter being more probable. Some scholars date them to the Megalithic period. Further research in the pigments, excavation in the vicinity and comparative study are called for in this new and interesting field to get a clear picture.

Cittannavaasal, Pudukkottai District, Dancing girl on a Pillar of verandah, Jain cave temple.

PAINTING IN THE SANGAM AGE

N.Subrahmanian

The development of the fine arts in any society is a reflection of the philosophy of an attitude to life of the members of that cultural group. This ethos will inform all the thoughts and activities of that people, subject of course to the necessity of change occasioned by foreign contacts and the inevitable internal growth, however tardy and slow it might be

The sensitivities of a people are best represented by their notion of aesthetic creation, purpose and enjoyment. The definition of 'beauty' by each culture assumes basic importance in this context. There is a sense in which all India grew a common philosophy of aesthetics; but from another angle, it could be, with equal validity, stated that there were distinct regional expressions of that sensitivity. The Tamil region, due to essentially geographical and consequently historical circumstances, stoodout distinctly in this respect from the rest of the subcontinent, but within a recognizable ambit of Indian culture. Bharata Natyam and Carnatic music are instances of this mosaic within a unified cultural architecture.

In this paper I shall be concerned only with the development of painting in the Tamil country since early times. I shall however confine myself mostly to the Sangam age though necessary references to later development will also be made.

Practically all the painting that was done in the Sangam age and during many centuries thereafter till the modern period, is known to us through literary references; the exceptions are the following cases.

1. Cittannavaasal where one comes across some very decayed painting;
2. The ruins of fast disappearing painting in some of the Mahabalipuram rock temples-which seem to have done service orginally for the religious icons which perhaps came in later;
3. The Pallava paintings at Kanchipuram and Panamalai.
4. The kind of painting one sees in the temple in Tanjore, as also the painted dolls which adorned the towers, and
5. The paintings during the Nayak period especially in the Madurai region.

There is sufficient literary evidence in the corpus of Sangam poems to introduce us to the tradition of painting in those times. They called painting Ooviyam[1], Oovam[2], or simply Oo[3] and the word Chittiram came into general use only in the post Sangam period, though it was known to the Sangam Tamils; for example the Manimeekalai partly transforms the word Chittira Seenan (the name of a gandharva) into Oviya Seenan[4] The painter himself was Oviyan[5], and the community of painters Oviyar, Oviya makkal[6] Ova makkal[7], or Kannul Vinainnar[8]. Adiyarkkunallar, the commentator on the Cilappadikaaram mentions Oviya Nul[9], a text book on painting' and it is referred to in the Manimeekalai text[10] Adiyarkkunallar speaks of the many positions in painting like *Nirral (standing), Irutal (being seated)*, Kitattal (lying), Iyankutal (movement; evidently this has reference to painting of static and moving objects: like (a) a person posing for a picture or (b) a hunting scene. It is impossible to date this Oviya Nul; but Adiyarkkunallar of the 13th century knew it and respected it sufficiently to quote it as an authority.

The Sangam Tamils considered the static condition as the most essential characteristic of a painting; for a painter takes a cut-off point in an object or a movement, and expression thereafter is permanently static, unless it is, e g., a motion picture. They emphasised this aspect almost invariably while referring to painting[11]. Though it is true that this is the case with sculpture too, they seem to have been impressed mostly by this aspect of expression in the case of painting.

The picture of Manimeekalai standing, begging bowl in hand, motionless in front of Adhirai's house is described as 'Punaiya Ooviyam'[12]: literally 'unadorned painting'. There is a reason why Manimeekalai should have stood motionless; for it was incumbent on alms-begging ascetics to stand mutely and indicate their want. The same expression occurs in Nedunalvaadai also, where Nachchinarkkiniyar has a special comment to make on it. He says: 'Punaiya Ooviyam' means a picture not painted in colour but drawn in mere outline'. A comparison of such a picture to a live girl is explained as referring to a person whose natural beauty is not refined by any artificial ornamentation, but remains in one's native simplicity. What is relevant to our theme here is that the Sangam Tamils knew a kind of drawing which did not involve the use of colour.

The expression Kannul Vinainnar, used to mean painters, is also given an interesting meaning by Nachchinarkkiniyar who says they are so called because their achievements are such as to hold the observer's attention, rendering incapable the withdrawal of their view of the piece of art.

In the Chintaamani[13] there is a reference to the use of certain chemical solubles as paint in drawing pictures. The same reference speaks of painting on cloth; the nature of the cloth is however not indicated. We do not know if canvas or silk was used; or whether it was plain cotton fabric. Apart from cloth, walls certainly constituted an usual medium A Padirruppattu reference mentions 'a painted wall'[14] A Manimeekalai passage speaks of painting on a brightly plastered, white, brick wall[15] There is no indication here that it was fresco; most probably it was not. The Cintaa-

mani refers to painting on a marble wall[16] the 'marble' was perhaps poetic imagination, but the wall was very much in the tradition. There is little doubt that murals were known. The familiar Tamil proverb that 'a wall must first be secured before painting can be attempted' reflects this.

The Cilappatikaaram says that the yaal was covered in a cloth case which was *painted and embroidered*[17] The combination of painting and embroidery was not uncommon, perhaps. In the Manimeekalai, the verdurous garden is likened to the ground being covered by a coloured blanket[18] The expressions Oviya elini and Oviya vidaanam[19] occurring in Cilappatikaaram refer to painting on the stage screen and the tapestry inlaying the *canopy of the royal throne respectively.*

Paintings were confined mostly to the walls and ceilings of palaces, temples and the residences of the rich. On the walls of the *houses of* merchant princes, naturally the goddess of wealth was painted; and in the houses of the hetaerae, again, 'thiru' who combines in herself beauty and wealth was painted; and that was appropriate in a place where beauty was exchanged for wealth. Palaces had separate quarters called Chittira mantapam i.e., the hall whose walls and ceiling were painted[20] We often hear of the Chittira maatam; in *the Puranaanuuru* we come across a Pandyan prince called Chittira maatattuttunciya Nanmaaran[21] The association of maatam and chittiram is frequent and insistent; but one thinks that maatams were especially intended and set apart for painting; the Nannul expression, Maatakkuccittiramum is very well-known[22] It may be that the Kopuram took on the *sculptured figures* while *on the maatam* pictures were painted.

The kind of brush or pencil they used gets mention on a verse in Narrinai[23] It seems they used a kind of colour tipped pencil; perhaps it had a brush-like tip which was dyed in different colours. The brightly *multicoloured nature of the painting is well* brought out by the comparision of the picture to a butterfly[24]

Among the objects painted surely religious figures, particularly those of the different gods and goddesses were more common; but if later painting as in Cittannavaasal is any indication, natural objects like flowers and creepers may be supposed to have been represented in painting. The kings of the early artistic Pallava period (7th cent. A.D.) seem to have been interested in promoting and possibly *practising painting;* for one of them Mahendravarman-I was called Chitrakaara ppuli. What kind of painting they patronised is not known to us.

We have no remains of Sangam painting; for the architecture, painting and sculpture of that period, whatever be the materials in which these arts were incorporated, were of such a perishable nature that it is natural that they have all vanished leaving behind only literary references from which we infer whatever has been said above. In the medieval period the temple towers and the interior of the shrines were painted with appropriate religious themes; and we have the fading pictures in Tanjore and some patches on a few temple towers. The Nayak period did witness some activity in this direction; but a general decline is quite noticeable. There has been no serious resurgence in the painter's profession in *Tamilnadu,* if we ignore the sporadic attempts at revolutionary modern painting.

The ancient Tamil sources which mention painting leave us in doubt as to whether oil was ever used in painting or miniature painting was practised. Some sources do suggest the idea of perspective in painting; but it is certain that the background was suggested by diminutive drawing of receding figures, some of which looked almost like standing on the shoulders of the figures in the foreground.

Painting in colours was done not only on cloth and plaster; some private practice was also indulged in by lovers who used a kind of coloured paint to daub their beloved breasts with some pasty mixture; and they drew cupid on the surface. Though the antiquity of tattooing in this society cannot be precisely determined, this kind of painting called 'toyyil' seems to have been as old as the institution of love.

The distant pre-megalithic ancestors of the Sangam Tamils did indulge in some cave painting as can be seen in some caves in South Arcot District. It is interesting to note that these ancient painters mostly drew moving objects, even as the cavemen of Altamira also did; they rarely drew static objects. The primitive mind was capable only of observation, which was enough to take in easily an action scene. To draw a stationary object requires contemplation which only evolved man could manage.

Finally it may be stated that we have only enough painting on record to merit a cursory or perfunctory description; we have no material to permit of any meaningful art criticism. The quantity of painting available in TamilNadu is not enough to suggest a school or a special system. The art critic, if he has no substance to go by, usually becomes poetic and is lost in eloquently sentimental clouds of misty phraseology; but even that will not serve when we have such scarcity in the field of painting as we have in TamilNadu, though Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have even scantier paintings.

REFERENCES

1. Netunalvaatai: 1.147
2. Cirupaanaarruppatai: 1.70
3. Patirruppattu: 68:17
4. Manimeekalai: XXI:135
5. Ibid: III:7
6. Ibid:XXVIII.38
7. Narrinai: 118:7
8. Cilappatikaaram: V:30
9. Ibid· VII.23-26: Adiyaarkkunallaar commentary
10. Manimeekalai: II:31
11. Cilappatikaaram: XXII:11; Paripaatal: XXI:28, Akanaanuuru: 5:20
12. Manimeekalai: XVI:131;XXII:88; Netunalvaatai: line 147
13. Cintaamani: 1003; see also Kandapuraanam, Kumarapurippadalam: 164
14. Patirruppattu: 68:17
15. Manimeekalai: III:127-131
16. Cintaamani: 594
17. Cilappatikaaram: VII:1
18. Manimeekalai: III:168
19. Cilappatikaaram: VI:169; XXVII:156; III:111
20. Ibid: XXVIII:87
21. Puranaanuuru: 59
22. Nannuul (Sirappuppaayiram): 55
23. Narrinai: 118:7
24. Cirupaanarruppatai: 70; Akanaanuuru: 54:4

PALLAVA PAINTINGS

K.R. Srinivasan

The trend, of late, in art studies (including architecture and sculpture) has been more in the direction of giving regional and chronological appellations on the ground that it will only be on this basis that the spatial and temporal developments of art and architecture can be better brought out. Such a basis, as in the case of the Pallavas, tends largely to a dynastic grouping-a tendency to avoid which precautions have to be taken, for art and architecture should reflect something less ephemeral than dynastic vagaries. But it should be said at the same time in cases where all or most of the art objects and architectural monuments in a group are the direct outcome of the initiative and' patronage of rulers of a particular dynasty (as the Pallavas again), a dynastic appellation of that group would doubtless be justified.

In TamilNadu, though we have many word pictures relating to the practice and art of painting scattered as they are as passing references in the corpus of early Tamil literature collected as extant and published in schematic anthologies, one is not able to see the paintings or the other objects of architecture and sculpture today. This is mainly because they were done, or wrought out of impermanent fabric - brick, mortar and timber. These have not stood the havoc of time and weather and have been lost for ever The excavated remains too of the period, that have preserved the tints of applied colour are too few and fragmentary to give one a coherant picture as would tally with the literary references.

To the Pallavas, therefore, would go the credit of leaving for us today, the first examples of mural painting and sculpture as also architectural models, fully reflecting in all the parts and details the contemporary styles of construction in brick and timber in the more permanent and durable medium of stone. So faithful has been the imitation, that one can say that they are fossilised objects in stone of contemporary and earlier forms. The rule of the artistic Pallavas was from the second half of the seventh century A.D. to the first half of the ninth-a period of great achievements not only in war and polity but also in architecture literature and the fine arts. With the Cholas in hibernation, it was the equally powerful Pandyas that were

holding the southern half of Tamilnadu, south of the Kaveri, during the period. They too were following the lead, as if, in competition with the Pallavas in the matter of excavating rock-cut cave-temples, monolithic vimanas (like the so-called rathas of Mahabalipuram) and building structural temples in stone. So, in accordance with what we have enunciated regarding regional versus dynastic nomenclature as the matter of art history, we may have to take the whole region of Tamilnadu in a sweep while discussing the art and history of painting; one may find of course slight variations in style and idiom, when the individual examples are separated from one another both by time and place, but such considerations would come in only in a detailed treatise on the subject, site by site.

In Mahendra Pallavas first essay in making a temple of stone, for the Trinity in Mandagappattu, the three shrine niches seem to have contained only paintings of the deities, Brahma, Siva and Vishnu and not any bas - relief icons. The custom of iconic representation of deties in worship as wall paintings (Suvar oviyam, a bhitti-citra) was prevalent earlier as for example could be gathered from an Akanaanuuru verse (137:11.13-15) which describes a dilapi dated brick-and-timber temple, as having contained a painted icon of the deity (eludu ani kadavul)

Ittikai netum cuvarvittam viilntena
manippuraatturanta maramcoomaatattu
elutani katavul

In contemporary times we have Poykai Alvar's, Iyarpa (verse 14) - in the Divya Prabandham (2095) collection saying the same:

Avar avar taam taam arintavaaru eetti
ivar ivar emperumaan enru
cuvar micaiccaarttiyum, vaittumtoluvar
ulakalanta muurtti uruvee mutal

The Avanti Sundari Katha sara narrates how the queen of Rajahamsa (Rajasimha) offered worship to Guha in the cave-temple, the wall painting (bhitti citra) of Guha playing beside his divine parents (Siva and Uma). Evidently it was a Somaskanda group, a favourite iconic theme of the Pallavas. A son was born to her as a result of her prayer. More examples can be quoted, but for limitation of space.

The lay-out of the paintings in such cave-temples may be discussed briefly. The vitaana or carpet canopy (meerkatti, vitaanam) covered the ceiling as would be the case with temporary pandals, here cloth or carpet canopies with colour designs of flowers, beads, animals and other objects are spread attached to the ceilings. The walls also received attention, and were painted instead of being left plain land bare. The pillars and beams too came in for such embellishment by paintings directly on the wooden surface over a lime-wash, while in the case of the brick or mud walls, it was over a coating of thick ground plaster. The same practice was extended to the rock-cut cave-temples and stone structural temples, after their advent everywhere in India, as at Ajanta, Ellora, Bagh and other centres.

The oblong shrine cell of the Pallava cave-temple in Mamandur (Mamandur-I) evidently dedicated to Vishnu, and attri buted to Mahendravarman—I, Pallava, contains traces of painting Such painted stucco is visible in patches in the rear and side walls of the sanctum. The rear wall seems to have carried a painted stucco relief of the principal deity, while the paintings elsewhere are traced and laid on the lime plaster coat over the walls. The colours

employed are red, yellow, white and green and are of mineral origin, derived from red and yellow, ochres, lime and terre-verte.

Such traces of painted plaster, or as painted stucco covering the stone bas-reliefs are discernible in many of the other cave-temples, such as the upper Rock-cut cave temple in Trichy (of the time of Mahendra,) and in the Varahamandapa, Kotikal mandapa, and Ramanuja Mandapa cave temples of post Mahendra times in Mahabalipuram and in the Draupadi, Arjuna and Dharmaraja rathas or monolithic vimanas, of times between Mahendra I and Rajasimha I (630-700 A.D.) in the same place.

When we come to the stone structural phase as initiated with success by Rajasimha (A.D.700-730), we have remnants of paint ings extant in the Panamalai temple and in the Kailasanatha complex of Kanchipuram.

In the Talagirisvara temple on top of Panamalai the attached subshrine on the northern side of the main vimana contains in the inner surface of its rear (west) and side (north) walls, remnants that make a rather coherent picture of the subject matter. The painting on the rear wall is a rare piece of dancing Siva in what is called the Samhara—tandava pose, with one of the bent legs, with knee bent and the shank resting on the ground, and the other leg bent up at the knee and with shank and foot in the air, one hand raised up. The other parts have been lost, except the trunk and face. On the flanking wall, stands Uma in the graceful pose, as if watching Her Lord in dance, with one leg drawn up and bent slightly while standing on the other leg. Her bewitching countenance, pose and the diaphanous skirt with flow designs form an exquisite piece of divine portraiture over her head is a parasol on the stem of which her bent rests with its foot. The parasol is white with bead and tassels hanging down from its brim. The rounded face, slightly longish, and other features of Siva and Uma recall the reliefs from the Kailasanatha of Kanchi attesting to their contemporaneity. Though this temple is built of fairly hard stone, granite, and as such may not need further protection from wind and weather, yet tradition warranted the application of a lime plaster coat which formed the carrier for the paintings.

In the Kailasanatha complex in Kanchi built of a coarse and friable sand-stone, a protective plaster coat was a necessary expedient, as on the trap rock of Ajanta and Ellora, in addition to the convention as originating of necessity in brick-built structure. The walls of the main vimana carry numerous bas-reliefs, which too have been covered by lime stucco, and the fact that they were painted with appropriate colours is seen from the remnants in the crevices - of their bodies, armpits, neck etc. The lesser shrines forming the malika or cloister chain retain in a few cases the paintings on their flat walls as also on the stucco over the reliefs. The extant paintings however are not of one period and neither are they all Pallava. The fact that the extant plaster of the sixth row, and a label (biruda) inscription of Rajasimha himself in the north— eastern cloister shrine (both discovered by the present author), and also the fact that after the first Muslim onslaught and devastation of this temple (among others), the Vijayanagar prince, Kumara Kampana repaired the temple, as attested by inscriptions would indicate that at least paintings of three periods Pallavas, Chola and Vijayanagar were laid on the walls and sculptures. The earliest would be what overlay the biruda

inscription of Rajasimha himself indicating that the Pallava phase of paintings would be late in his reign if not slightly later. Likewise, the plaster with front overlying the Chola inscription would belong to the 11th-12th centuries at the earliest and the Vijayanagar paintings after Kampana. Art connoisseurs have yet to realise this and sort out what remains of the paintings according to the three phases. But one may be sure that the Siva-Uma groups can be Pallava, because of this resemblance to such forms in sculpture in the same temple and because the icon was characteristic of the dynasty. The other notable figures are Brahma with four faces in one of the cloister shrines of the rear (western) row, and opposite to it a fragment of a figure in the pose, with a Yoga patta round the knee. In recent months many white—washed paintings have been re covered by the Archaeological Survey of India.

The classical and well-known paintings in the Cittannavaasal cave-temple cannot be called 'Pallava', even if we adopt the dynastic appellation. For one thing it lay much to the south of the Kaveri, the dividing line of the Pallavas of the north and the Pandyas of the south and secondly the Pandyas too could boast of a greater number of rock-cut cave-temples than these of the Pallavas in their area. Furthermore the verse inscription in the flank of the cave-temple referring to renovations, improvement and embellishment of the cave-temple in the times of Pandya Avanipasekhara Sri Vallabha (A.D. 815—62) would put the date of the paintings as of the early 9th century as was first pointed out by the present author as early as 1942-43 in a paper read before the Indian History Congress session at Madras that the paintings were not 'Pallava' as earlier scholars have declared them to be Much less can it be of the 7th century Mahendravarma period. The present author has confirmed his statement by further studies as for instance in the 1982 number of the Vivekananda Kendra Patrica (pp.93.108). In spite of this, some writers still persist in calling the paintings 'Pallava', though the writ of Mahendra, or that of his successors did not run in this area south of the Kaveri, till the times of the later Pallavas of the 9th century. The inscription referred to, is specific in stating that the embelli shment of the cave-temple was by one Madirai Asiryar in the times of Avani pasekhara Srivallabha (Sri Mara Sri Vallabha). The cave-temple, however, dates from earlier times.

The paintings are found on the ceiling (vitana) of the shrine chamber and front mandapa, as also on the under-side of the cornice in front. Though the upper cubical parts of the two pillars and two pilasters carried paintings, it is only on three faces of these columns out of ten that one finds the paintings still extant while the rare plaster coat is seen in others. The paintings are all Jaina in character. The layout resolves into two groups, the ceiling paintings and the pillar top paintings. The former again consists of the vitana (Citturac-ceykai padam as the Tamil classics call it) over the central part of the mandapa ceiling that extends to the front two thirds of the area of the sanctum ceiling behind. This is the celebrated lotus tank scene. It depicts a placid pool of lotus and water-lily in bud and bloom at all stages. The large circular lotus leaves when young and unfolded, looking like shallow brick used vases, showing their pale-green undersides with the prominent ribbing while the other ones floating over the surface show that olive green upper sides. The

circular but cleft lily leaves likewise show the variation of their natural colours on their dorsal and ventral sides.The lotus and lily flowers pop out over the surface, their green stalks., with blackish prickles, in the case of the lotus and smooth in the case of the lily. The fine variation and the varying shades from whitish to lotus red of the older and outer petals and the younger and inner petals are remarkablly brought out. So also in the case of the lily blossoms, with their green calyx and smooth stalks. The pond teems with aquatic life –fishes of sorts, cleaving through the water, with a lone makara (mythical animal) at one corner that contrasts with the otherwise perfect realism of the whole Cakora birds in pairs hover close over the water surface, while some have come to rest and others feeding their chicks as the floating lotus leaves. Animals like elephants wade into the waters three of them of differing colours, but of perfect natural form, while buffaloes of dark shades wallow near the edge of the waters. The faunistic conception includes three young men in perfect youthful form and mein, in loin cloth, wading knee-deep and gathering the flowers, one holding a white cyclindrical flower basket of plaited palmyrah frond (pukkudalai-pushpaputa) slung by its handle over the left arm. The body colours of the three are lotus red (padma) and orange (pita) two of the three colours (the third being white or sukla), specified for aspirant souls. These three bhavyas are perfect studies of the human male form. Thus the tank is enlivened by all the five kinds of vertebrate forms as the zoologist would call it, reptiles, birds, mammals including man. The entire com position as also the individual components, presents a fine study in realism proving that the artist was at once an observant naturalist as he was painter, a fact that belies the oft repeated accusation that Indian art lacks in naturalism and realism.

The inner third of the sanctum ceiling, that comes over the three Jaina bas-reliefs on the rear wall is another canopy or vitana, of conventional pattern. It is a saree-like carpet with red borders (muntaanai talappu or pallu), and ribbon-like red hems, the body green, and filled with interlinked squares and circles. The squares contain the conventional lotus-like pattern in black, while each cirlce circumscribes its arms with bulbous ends. Seated over the trans verse arm of each cross, and flanking the upper half of the upright arm of the cross are a mithuna couple, one, either side, while the two over quadrants contain each a figure of a lion, all in black outline. This canopy simulates the familiar 'Kalam-Kari' textiles of South India.

Over the southern end of the mandapa beyond the central lotus pool the ceiling is curved again by a padma vitana canopy in red, with hems and borders, showing scattered lotuses in full blossom each against a green circular lotus leaf background. These naturalistic lotus blossoms against lotus leaf backgrounds of natural size and form are scattered over the red body of the canopy. While edging the hems, the blossoms are shown against the semi-circular half of the lotus leaf. This padma vitana forms a canopy over the bas-relief of Parsvanatha enshrined in the niche of the southern wall of the mandapa.

The corresponding niche on the northern side containing the bas-relief of a Jaina Acharya has a different kind of ceiling canopy overhead.It is a carpet canopy fitted with conventional lotus designs rather

densely aggregated.

The three under surfaces of the beam over the two central pillars and the two extreme pilasters of the mandapa facade row, bear again smaller canopy designs. The central one is a meandering creeper with naturalistic lotus blooms, issuing out of a makara head, simulating a makara torana as appropriate over the central main entrance. The two flanking sections of the underside of the beam have the conven tional carpet canopy designs as over the Acharya niche inside.

The underside of the cornice projected in front over the beam is divided into five sections, three of which are canopies with the conventional lotus design, while two, coming opposite each pillar of the facade and in between the central and extreme canopy pieces of either side are beautiful patterns of the conventional hamsa with elaborately scrolled tail plumes.

The front faces of the upper sadurams or cubical pictures of the two facade pillars carry paintings of two different attitudes of dance or Karana. Since the parts below their waists are low, the head, torso and arms alone being extant, the actual dance movement or Karana is not identifiable. But what remains of the two exhibit exquisite beauty of form, lithe poses, lively expression, vivacity and movement, and thus rank among the best specimens of ancient Indian painting.

The northern face of the upper saduram or cubical section of the southern pillar of the facade retains the faded figures of a royal personage in full regalia of a king with elaborate crown and other ornaments accompanied by his consort again the same lady with a remarkable hair-do or dhammilla the couple preceded by an ascetic, as of leading the couple towards the sanctum to which their faces are turned. In the back-ground (hind corner register) is a pavilion a sibika by which they perhaps arrived. From the context of the inscription, mentioned earlier, the royal personages could only be identified as the Pandya King Avanipa sekhara and his queen and not as Mahendravarman Indra or Mahesa, etc., as earlier scholars have speculated.

The paintings are remarkable for the firmlines, deft brush work, fine details, correct proportions, light and shade effect, and suggestion of depth. The artists were at home equally with realism and naturalistic reproduction as with what were traditional, idealistic or symbolic and conventional. They were close students of nature and considering the technique employed, also quick with the brush.

A similar carpet canopy of conventional design was exposed to view in fragments on the ceiling of the mantapa of the Siva rock-cut cave-temple (Satyagirisvara) in Tiru mayam, by the present writer, working with Dr.S.Paramasivan, Archeological Chemist, i.e., the chemical clearing of the monument forty to forty-five years ago.

The presence of painting as revealed by extant patches, on the ceiling of the mandapa of the rock-cut cave-temple in Tirumalapuram (Tirunelveli district) was known for a long time. Besides conventional designs of the vitana Pallava fragments of the figures of ganas and birds have been noticed.

Further south, the rock-cut cave-temple at Tirunandikkara contains fragments of ceiling paintings forming the vitana of the

mandapa. The two cave-temples would appear to have been originally Jaina in dedication, when perhaps the paintings were executed, but subsequently appro priated by the Saivas and converted into linga-temples.

Before closing this brief account of early paintings in Tamilnadu, we come back to Tondaimandalam, the home province of the Pallavas to notice two border line cases.

In Armamalai (ஆர்மாமலை) in the North Arcot district occurs an early natural cavern of large dimensions converted into a triple shrined Jaina temple by interposition of brick walls. The shrines stood in a line. The few stone sculptural fragments and a vatteluttu Tamil inscription with grantha letters intermixed, would indicate its date as belonging to the period under notice, as also the Rashtrakuta Ganga style, and Jaina character of the temple. Fragments of a citravitana or floral carpet-canopy as at Cittannavaasal as extant retain same intelligible figures. They are couples riding on different mounts, hamsa figures and the like. One such couple riding a ram, the male holding the reins by one hand with the other in the stava (adoration) pose with his consort behind also with one hand in the same stava pose and the other in Kati (applied to the hip) at the south east corner is Agni with his consort. On the south one could perceive only the rump of a buffalo the riding couple, similar to Agni and his consort in pose, being identifiable as Yama and his consort.

By reconstruction one can infer that it was a depiction of the eight dikpalas, each on his appropriate vahana (mount) and with his consort This is a theme familiar in the Chalukya-Rashtrakuta-Ganga area (of the north and south Deccan) of the times but rare in the Pallava-Pandya area. The carpet-canopy, from whatever is extant depicts the lotus tank scene as at Cittannavaasal with naturalistic lotus flowers in bud and bloom, elephants, fish, etc., Again as at Cittannavaasal there is also extant the head of the portrait of a royal figure, on the eastern part of the first wall. All these indicate a ninth-tenth century date, and in point of time, space and style put the paintings in between the Rashtrakuta paintings at Ellora in the north, particularly the Indra Sabha paintings, and the Pandyan paintings, Cittannavaasal in the south which they resemble more in the theme of the lotus tank and royal portrait, while the presence of the dikpala figures indicate a northern and western affiliation to the Rashtrakuta-Ganga genre. They would appear to be nearer to the Rashtrakuta Ellora in point of time than to Cittannavaasal.

The well-known paintings in Tirumalai, again in the North Arcot district, are also Jain. The temple starting with a natural cavern as the nucleus converted by brick-work additions and later elaborated by cut-stone work, contains paintings, the earliest of which would belong to the period under our consideration. We have definite epigraphical evidences of Rashtrakuta influence in the growth of the temple preceding the early Chola phase.

Thus if one would for the nonce set aside the dynastic appellations and contemporary politico-historical considerations and agree to take the whole of Tamilnadu as a region and the developoment of the painter's art in the region, we have evi dences enough for forging a chain of examples chronologically from the seventh to the close of the ninth centuries that preceded the famous Chola frescoes of

Thanjavur.

The technique is uniformly of the lime-medium kind fresco, or fresco secco involving inorganic mineral pigments alone, except for the dark, where a limited use of organic carbon-charcoal of some kind. That this was the technique familiar to the Tamil artist in the Sangam epoch, preceding the period of our present consideration is sufficiently hinted at by some references in the literature. We may recall one as example.

> 'எவ்வகை உயிர்களும் உவமம் காட்டி
>
> வெண்சுதை விளக்கத்து வித்தகர் இயற்றிய
>
> கண்கவர் ஓவியம் ....'

of the Manimeekalai Canto III line 129-31.

The technique in brief as scientifically investigated may be mentioned in con clusion. The rather rough surface of the ceiling or wall of brick or stone or brick-masonry formed what is called the carrier, and its roughness helped in holding fast the applied plaster The thick (about 5mm-11mm according to the variations in level of the surface) of rough plaster (sand and lime) making the surface even with a layer of finer plaster over it formed the 'ground' the fine plaster varying in thickness from 0.3 mm to 0.5 mm. A pure rich lime having no hydraulic properties was chosen for preparing the ground. The pigments were laid quickly when the uppermost lime-wash was still wet (fresco) or in the alternative the pigments were mixed with clear lime water and used (Fresco-secco). No adhesives or water soluble binding medium are used as exposure to air produces a thick transparent protective layer of calcite by the calcium oxide of the lime combining chemically with the carbon-di-oxide of the air. The wetness of the ground also allows penetration of the pigment so protected into the ground. This makes the paintings more water-resistant and permanent than those made by the tempera process, often with organic colours in addition to the mineral ones, mixed with an adhesive or ghee and applied on a dried lime-washed surface

If one could judge the nature of the painted figures on the outer walls of mansion of Kaveripattinam, that were said to be dimmed by the dust of the road raised by the constant chariot traffic, even as the body of the elephant that has thrown mud over itself, these painting should well have been of the lime-medium a Fresco variety, for if they were to remain long without being washed away by rains if glue was added to their composition or bleached by exposure to sun (as organic pigments will do) they should be of the mineral pigments acid applied by the lime-medium process. The pigments used were on analysis found to be lime for white shades of ochre red orange and yellow turmeric for green etc. One should note the remarkable consistency in the adoption of the lime-medium technique in paintings of the subsequent periods after Cholas, the Vijayanagar rulers and the Nayaks in Tamil nadu.

PAINTING IN TAMIL LITERATURE

M. Arunachalam

Painting is the simplest and perhaps the first of the fine arts. Probably there were treatises on this subject; the commentator Adiyarkkunallar mentions an Ooviyanuul, a treatise now lost. Ooviyanuul is also mentioned by Manimeekalai. It says the Book of Painting is one of the texts the dancer has to master. However, Tamil literature gives us quite a volume of references to the art of drawing or painting, from the earliest periods. It has to be remembered that certain arts are difficult of preservation and so we do not have any evidences of the early arts.

Perhaps music is one such. Paripaatal is the Sangam musical poetry, but although its tunes, its composer and tune setter are mentioned, we do not have any singers. Thereof, since then the tradition has been lost.

So is painting. Painting could not be preserved easily. Great paintings naturally perish due to the absence of preserving facilities. But yet the references to painting are quite interesting and well worth a survey.

The unrequited lover in love poetry draws a picture of his lady-love and threatens to mount the palmyrah horse, matal-eerutal, which will end in his own death, unless she is wedded to him.

The love-lorn lover too pines after his lady love. There is always his companion who of course helps in his love escapades but at the same time he does not spare him. One of the themes in that love poetry is for the companion to say that he would prepare a portrait of the lady for the consolation of the lover. The lover taunts him saying that her gait and the music of her words could not be produced in a picture. Here he asks, "Are there any pictures in your picture gallery which have portrayed a similar gait and similar sweetness of words?"

There have been a number of art galleries in temples and royal palaces through all the centuries and they attracted visits from the public on occasions of festivals and the like.

Paripaatal gives us a view of a picture gallery in the Muruka temple of Tirupparan-

kunram. Visitors to the temple pay a visit to the picture gallery and look at the pictures. One points to the picture of the Solar system that is revolving round the pole star. Another, when his wife pointed to some pictures, says, "This is Rati and this is Kaman". Another says: "This is the form of the cat which Indra assumed when he tried to escape from the wrath of Gautama; this is Ahalya; this is Gautama; this is the stone-form taken by Ahalya when cursed by Gautama". Many such pictures, adorned Tirupparankunram temple. This is a remarkable description from Sangam poetry which indicates the well-developed art of painting and the existence of art-galleries, frequented by the public.

Here, we have a visual illustration, being an explanation in detail of a classical anecdote. This painting portrays an incident in the Ramayana. Being found in Tirupparankunram, we may say that the story of Ahalya was quite clearly known to the Tamil people of the day, and the artist had tried his hand at portraying this well- known epic. Naturally the art in the painting would appeal more when the theme is familiar than in a case where the theme is unfamiliar or imaginary.

The painting of the story of Ahalya is a rare description which has come down to us in a work of about 2000 years ago. It was exhibited in a Muruka temple no doubt, but the subject matter had nothing to do with Muruka. It was one of the pictures in a picture gallery there and the poet has simply chosen to describe it. Certainly there were many more. We do not know now.

Even earlier than Paripaatal there were art galleries in the Sangam age (300 B.C.-200A.D.) Sattanar sings a song on a Pandiya who had died while paying a visit to the art gallery; we do not know his natural name; he later come to be known as the Pandiya who died in the art palace.

There was a crystal palace in Puhar. Manimeekalai, in order to escape the overtures of Prince Udaya Kumaran, entered it and hid herself. The Prince saw her inside the palace but mistook her for a mere painting.

According to Manimeekalai we learn that there were paintings on the lime mortar surface of house walls which depicted all life-from the celestials to all catagories of animals. Probably these were on the outer walls of the open pials of houses and during festive occasions the visitors and passersby feasted their eyes on these pictures.

Many songs say that living houses presented the appearance of paintings. This means that houses had fine pictures painted on their walls.

Perumkatai refers to an art gallery which housed pictures of Vishnu in the three forms-aquatic creatures, animals and humans; what these refer to are ten avataras. These figures, it is said, were represented in the gallery by paintings.

We have had a large number of fresco paintings during historical periods. The Ajanta frescoes coeval with Pallava period and the Sigiriya of Sri Lanka were all of Tamilian origin. It is possible that all early temples which were in brick and mortar had quite a large number of paintings in colour, just as they had sculpture in three dimensions, but when the brick and mortar structures gradually were replaced by stone-structures in the seventh century, the paintings had been destroyed. However, we do have a few left in such places as Cittannavaasal, Kailasanathar temple of Kanchi, the Thanjavur temple and a few more on the stone surface itself.

Five sabhas (dance-halls) had been dedicated to Lord Nataraja in Tamilnadu in different places as the golden, silver, copper, gem and Chitra halls. Of these, Chitra Sabha is the sabha in Coutrallam in Tirunelveli district, famous for its waterfalls. This is a separate hall not within the temple, but away from it at some distance. Nataraja is here worshiped on a picture in colour painted on the wall. Usually in Saivism, pictures are not objects of worship, but it is remarkable that this picture is counted as one of the halls and is worshipped to this day. The picture is a colour painting.

Natural pigments were used on the paintings to represent many colours, such as blue , black, green, purple, yellow, white, red and vermilion. Herbal pigments and some chemical pigments were employed. For mural paintings there was quite a laborious process to prepare the surface so that it could hold the paint. The paint was applied when the lime-plaster was still wet. Illustrations on palm-leaf manuscripts had their own techniques of painting.

Like every other fine art, painting also had been oriented towards temple culture. We have seen how all paintings have been seen only in temples. During a temple Kumbabhishekam, the Shakti on the Vimana is drawn into a picture of the vimana by mantras and later transferred from the picture to the vimana as re-constituted. In the same manner, when there are no sculptural dwarapalakas at the entrance to the sanctum, one on either side is drawn as a picture and later the consecration work is carried on. These will indicate the function of pictures in temple rituals.

Cittannavaasal frescoes (8th century) are found on the ceilings, walls and pillars of the temple here. They depict a large variety of motifs like dancing-damsels, a royal pair, a lotus-tank and devotees plucking lotus flowers. Though subject to the ravages of time and neglect, they still astound us with the skill of the artist in colour work, in proportion, depth of conception and an idealism in realistic portrayal. The women's delineation particularly is very delicate

The unfading colours in the paintings of Ajanta, Thanjavur and other places create a wonder among artists today. How could the colours be so very permanent even after the lapse of more than a thousand years seems to be an unanswered question. Our people in the past had been engaged in the quest of the Elixir of life and the Philosopher's Stone which could ward off Death. In the process, though they did not succeed in the discovery of these, they had come to know a number of the secrets of nature and this knowledge is reflected in the evolution of the Siddha school of medicine. Here they had come to know the qualities and powers of many herbs unknown in the modern day. Naturally the herbs would have disclosed to them many of their properties of which curative properties might have been the generally acknowledged one, and the properties in regard to the lasting quality of colours could have been another.

The Kailasanathar temple frescoes have all almost disappeared because of the faulty choice of the rock in the temple and construction and because of ignorant *whitewashing in later times.* But even the remnants thereof enable us to imagine the superior skill in the figures of the early artist.

Many of the Tamilnadu paintings were inspired by religious literature. The Thanjavur temple frescoes are a standing monument to this inspiration. The Braha-

diswarar temple at Thanjavur was built by Rajaraja Chola (985-1014) and consecrated just after 1000 A.D. He is recognised as the greatest temple builder and as the dis coverer of the Devaram songs. But, his contribution to paintings of the Tamils is hardly known beyond a few scholars on this subject. When the temple was finished and consecrated, he had caused many wonderful paintings to be painted on the inner walls of the Vimana. The super-structure of the garbha griha of the temple is called the vimana and not as gopura as we generally understand the term. It is the vimana that is most magnificent in Thanjavur. Most of its admirers may not know that it is hollow inside. The very construction of such a hollow vimana over a wide garbha griha even today excites our imagination.

The existence of paintings there was unknown. S.K. Govindaswamy who acci dentally stumbled upon them and his dis covery revealed their glory to the outside world. During the later Nayak rule in Thanjavur, they had overlaid a coat of paint on the Chola frescoes, and hence the underlying layer escaped the notice of others. Govindaswamy died young. How ever, what has been revealed by him of the underlying layer is sufficient to highlight the real art of the early Chola painters. The painting here is mostly on nature and animal life. In this picture, the artist has introduced the ramblings of Siva as the eternal Bhikshatana.

Dakshinamurti is a concept unkown outside Tamil Nadu. There are different forms, about seven, about Dakshinamurti. Most of them are described in the Devaram hymns. Dakshinamurti is the eternal Supreme Guru who teaches *in the form of a* youth of sixteen years to the four sages by his simple silence and by the pose of the fingers in his right hand; the aged sages all dis persed, their doubts dispelled and all knowledge dawning in their souls.

Karuvur Devar was a great siddhar poet of the days of Rajaraja and his son Rajendra (1012-1044). He has sung hymnal songs during the construction of the temples at both Thanjavur and Gangaikondachola-puram. Some go as far as to say that he was *the spiritual guru of Rajaraja*. There is a fine portrait of Rajaraja and his guru in the lower left corner of the paintings done in a mood of reverence before Dakshinamurti. Karuvur Devar has left ten songs which have been included in the ninth book of the Saiva canon. In his song on Tiruvidaimarudur, he records that the Supreme Guru came to him and His grace enveloped him in the middle *of the night. The literary achievement of this* master was a force which might have inspired the painters to paint this remar kable portrait. The freshness in the colour of these paintings is the most remarkable feature and this and similar paintings are standing monuments of the Chola art.

The major events in the life of Saint Sundaramurti are also portrayed here. The portraits are to be seen to be understood. Siva appears as an old brahmin, at the wedding of Sundarar, kicks up a row and goes away with Sundarar as His servant. Two centuries later, in Periyapuranam, the scene recurs as one of the most realistic scenes painted in words. If one goes through the Periyapuranam scene, and then looks at this set of paintings, one could realise how the artist had tried to portray here the des criptions in every line, phrase and word in the Tamil text. The state of shock and surprise caused by the old man flourishing

his palm leaf-scroll is most realistic. Other details are also there in large numbers.

Similar is the scene of Saint Sundarar and Seeramaan Perumal ascending Mount Kailas on their respective mounts. Awe and reverence besides humour are there in the pictures which reveal the deep under standing of the Chola painters. Similar instances can be multiplied.

These were first drawn in outline and then filled with colours. The facial parts, the fingers, the multi-designed garments, the jewellery and even the ornaments of the elephant and the horse will impress the visitor for a long period.

We had two types of drawings-outline drawing and colour painting. When Visakai went to the public hall to question the deity there, without in the least decking herself she appeared like a 'Punaiyaa Ooviyam', an outline drawing; had she decked herself in the usual manner with colourful garments, jewels and flowers, she would then have appeared like a decorated painting (Manimeekalai).

People used to say that Gandhi was the delight of artists because in two or three lines, his personality could be produced on paper. We see the opposite in Perumkathai where the poet says that the damsel Maananikai was the despair of artists, because they could never produce her beauty on canvas.

A new type of painting known as the Thanjavur glass painting had come into vogue probably from the days of the Maratta rule in Thanjavur where deities are portrayed in colour and gold on plain glass-planes. The figures are painted on the back of the glass and are exposed to view from the front. Hence, great care and skill are required by the painter in super-imposing the colours one after the other in order to produce a total effect. This is a rare preserve of some families in Thanjavur. The finished work is neither idealistic nor realistic but yet has a delicacy and charm of its own. The picture is always kept for puja in the homes and is produced only on request.

Later day Nayak period paintings are to be seen in temples such as Chidambaram, Kurraalam, Madurai, Kumbhakonam and Sri Rangam. The picture of Mangammal witnessing the Tirukkalyanam festival is quite interesting. There is an inscription below the picture which mentions her as Devi Mangammal. Here, when writing the word 'Devi' the scribe places the double looped symbol before the letter 'da' to indicate 'de'. Mangammal ruled between 1689-1706 as the regent for her grandson, Vijayaranga Chokkanathan. The Jesuit father, Constantine Beschi entered the holy order in 1698 when he was just eighteen. In 1709, he was made a priest. He left Italy in 1710 and joined the Jesuit monastery in Pandinad in 1711. He passed away in 1747. It is claimed by some that Beschi was the innovator of some reformed symbols for the alphabets in the Tamil language. One of them is said to be this double loop sign for 'e' and 'o'. Now, we may realise that a contemporary painting of Rani Mangammal paints the word 'devi' with the double loop. We may be sure then that this form of the long letter was indeed in their writing. Hence, the credit cannot go to Beschi who landed in India in 1711, five years after Mangammal passed away. It is remarkable that the mode of writing in a painting here marks a landmark in the evolution of the Tamil alphabet.

The very concept of Nataraja is inspired by philosophy. But this philosophy had been

reduced to the form of hymns which are expressed both in the paintings and in the sculptures throughout Tamilnadu. Silpa-sastras will no doubt indicate the manner of carving the sculptures and the manner of drawing the brush over the lines, but it is devotional literature that imprints the philosophy in the memory of both the artists-the painter and the sculptor and guides their hands.

The artist in India always derives his inspiration from religion. Be it music, dance or poetry, painting or sculpture, or architecture, everything is oriented towards God or religion. Painting is no exception and painting also like the other arts was fully symbolic. The essentials of painting have been described in the text-books and there are six essentials. They are an appreciation of form, a sense of proportion and structure, sentiment or bhava, grace and delicacy, likeness to life and the intelligent and appropriate use of colours. The paintings found all over Tamilnadu in the past periods can easily be seen to display all these lakshanas.

Women in the day had put on dresses on which figures had been painted or worked by hand and this would tell us that painted and hand worked saris are nothing new.

It is a familiar tradition in Tamilnadu for the housewife to decorate the entrance to the house by drawing intricate patterns of circular figures in what is known as Kolam. This is done with a thin solution of ground rice flour and patterns are worked on the ground in flowers, flowerpots, chariots, animals and the like by a mere dexterity of the fingers; particularly the middle finger of the right hand, by just holding a piece of small rag soaked in the solution, and moving on the floor the middle finger which works the patterns. Modern mechanized urban life has invented a substitute in the shape of a perforated tin cylinder packed with the dry flour which drops through the perforation and draws a stereo-typed pattern. The imagination of the housewife-artist and the dexterity of her fingers are totally lost here.

On the 29th of October, 1982 we had news that the 'sapparam' on which the idol of Lord Brahadiswara and Brahadiswara and Brhannayaki were drawn along the streets overturned. It is a wide car-like vehicle on four wheels drawn by the devotees by two ropes along the main streets on the fifth night of the car festival. It is called in popular language Teru-Ādaicchān because it extends over the entire width of the street. The importance about this is that the front of the car is improvised very artistically and ornamentally, exactly like a temple tower with the white tender coconut leaves and mango leaves. Local people work at it from the afternoon and finish it by about 10 p.m. when the image is mounted on it and the car is drawn and brought to rest by 6 a.m. the next morning. This sapparam is always a matter of pride for the villagers. It brings out all the creative talents of the local people, including artisans like the mason and the carpenter take part in it. This is a fine work of art, a picture if we can call it so. Instead of the paint and brush for a picture, here tender white coconut leaves are the paint, the coconut leaf-rib is the pin acting as the brush; painting is plaiting. This is no less wonderful than a painted picture. This picture is for the moment, for the few hours from 10 p.m. like the early morning. It cannot be preserved the next day, because the white leaves dry up in the morning and shrink out of shape. This art is fast fading out because of the urbanization. May be in the next generation, no one will know what a sapparam was like.

PAINTING IN TAMIL THEATRE

N.V.Ram Narsan

> "Like the slender stem that
> bears a huge jack-fruit,
> too delicate is this lass,
> with too great a love"
>
> — *from Kuruntokai*.[1]

Tamil theatre is like a mural that has remained exposed to the weather for long. The colours have faded, the contours are lost and large areas have peeled off or been painted over. Still we may try and have an idea of its picturesque history through some painstaking study.

The earliest reference to 'theatre' in a Tamil work occurs in Kural, ascribed to the second century A.D. The term 'Kuuttaattu avaikkulaam'[2] meaning the 'audience at a playhouse' clearly implies the existence of theatre as an institution. Next, Cilappatikaaram, a work of the fifth century, provides us with a wealth of information on the stage. It gives detailed particulars of stage measurements, stage curtains and how they are fixed, art of illumination, prevailing theatre practices and a host of other technical details in regard to music and dance that point to a high level of accomplishment in the arts.

But theatre art was not confined to the limits of a constructed playhouse. Earliest cankam literature is replete with references to the place of Kuuttu, that is, both dance and dance-drama, in the lives of the Tamils. Song and dance would appear to have been a way of life with them, as natural as making love or going to war. Not only were there professional groups of entertainers depending on the King's bounty for making a living, but the people as a whole sang and danced, both men and women, king and warrior alike. They sang and danced at the countryside, at the battlefield, street junction, temple courtyard, community hall, almost anywhere. They sang and danced for invoking a blessing, honouring a hero or for just fun and laughter.

Cilappatikaaram makes mention of three stage curtains: one, oru muka elini fixed to the left stage pillar, a second, poru muka elini fixed to two right stage pillars and a third curtain, karantu varal elini, fixed at the top. It also mentions a painted canopy overhanging the stage, and pictures

of demi-gods placed on the stage for stage rites. But no curtain was used to divide the stage from the auditorium and hide it from view.

The three curtains may have been white or plain-coloured or embroidered like the covering of Matavi's veena. But none of the curtains was painted and used, establishing a locale or scene of action. The curtains were primarily used for effecting stage entrances of characters with dramatic impact. It is a credit to the theatrical sensibilities of the ancient Tamils that they had no use for the painted curtain and that they looked for other ways of employing the painter's vision in the theatre.

But spectacular, two-dimensional illusionistic scenes, painted in perspective, were the rage till the last quarter of the nineteenth century in Western theatres. It caught on in Indian theatres too at the turn of this century. Scene painters were hired in Tamil Nadu at fabulous salaries. The newly invented electric lamp came as an enormous, additional resource. With its help, scene-designers created fantastic, spectacular scenes— Indra Saba, Mount Kailas, Vaikuntam and the like. Changes from one gorgeous scene to another were made with breath-taking speed and efficiency. Stage work acquired the quality of magic and succeeded like magic.

The gathering force of the independence movement, the expanding social consciousness, spread of rationalist thought and scientific ideas did have an impact on the actor, the status of the art and theme content. The very puranic and mythological plays that were being produced were used as vehicles for projecting the new messages. Or the new genre of social plays came to be written. But basically the productions remained at the level of the illusionistic, picture—frame stage. This lasted well toward the mid-century.

Of Adolphe Appia it has been said, 'The history of stage-setting might almost be divided by B.A. (Before Appia) as history in general by B.C. (Before Christ)[3]

Appia held that theatrical productions must be based on the presence of the actor. Anything contrary to his presence must be eliminated. Three dimensional settings, rather than painted two dimensional settings, with an imaginative use of lighting, can alone provide a satisfactory answer. Stage pictures must be freed from the necessity of reproducing scenic backgrounds. Instead, they must be transformed until every element in them embodied the emotions that it was to arouse as an integral part of its form, its colour and its total design. The wind of change swept over the west and also the east.

The theatre in the early fifties in Tamil Nadu happened to attract a painter or two. The cyclorama and three dimensional settings were soon to become a general feature on the Tamil stage. Lighting was projected to suit the dramatic moods. Simultaneously there were experiments in new dramatic forms and themes and styles. The usually numerous scenes in a Tamil play gave place to the 'Act-play' with only a few sets, or even a single one.

In exceptional cases, attention was paid to stage movement, composition and choreography also. But sets still continued to be constructed mainly to establish locale and serve as a background.

After the fifties, the Sangeet Natak Akademi and Madras Natya Sangh

sponsored some theatre promotional activities. It was under one of these that Bharati's 'Kuyil Pattu' was produced in opera form, the entire stage picture of set, costumes, lighting and action blending as one, and providing a vehicle for the poetry and fantasy in the play. Another venture was an excercise in pure fancy that bore the imprint of the painter-director. It was a succession of visuals with absolutely no speech or song, but only some throat noises and drum beats. There was hardly any story but a theme line served well enough to develop the picturesque action sequence.

But discontent was brewing that Tamil theatre generally seemed to have lost direction and sense of purpose. Theatre had lapsed into escapist entertainment with little or no merit in either form or content. However worthwile experiments continued to be made. Bharati's Panchali Sabatham, for example, has been produced with at least four different approaches to set design, costuming and acting. But they were all flashes in the pan and it is not easy to assess them for lack of adequate documentation.

The awareness of the poor state of the Tamil theatre led to some vigorous counter-measures. The Regional Centre of the Lalit Kala Akademi at Madras has been the venue of some very interesting, experimental productions. It seemed to suggest that the painter-artist was making a strong entrance on the Tamil stage. Plays were produced on the open terrace of the Akademi, inside the exhibition hall and in the lawns.

Naturally, such diverse production conditions called for novel techniques in style and presentation, and acted as a spur to the imagination of the actor, director and the technical crew. The most significant end-point of this development today lies in a serious interest in terukkuuttu, the traditional theatre of Tamil Nadu. Invited audiences have been treated to specially arranged performances of terukkuuttu by the professional players, in an effort to understand the medium and its present relevance. Modern themes have been produced using the terukkuuttu style. Bharati's Panchali Sabatham also has been produced in terukkuttu style.

Terukkuttu is Tamil Nadu's oldest traditional theatre. Stage-decor is virtually non-existent in terukkuttu. But poets, painters and scholars are coming under its compelling spell. The visual element in terukkuttu is an inalienable part of its style and structure. It extends over every little of the striking out-of-the-world appearance of the characters, with their elaborate make-up, exotic costume, imposing head gear, and other outfit not to mention the altered pitch in their voice, song, gait, manner of entry, etc. Make-up details vary according to the characters. The rhythm of entry of characters varies with characters. The differences may not be immediately obvious to an uninstructed audience. But the difference will be sensed in the cumulative impact. The terukkuuttu almost reminds one of the scenic goals of Adolphe Appia.

The high point of drama is reached when the visuals combine to become one with the play. Drama is hailed as drsya-kavya, i.e. a kavya with the visual attribute. But it should really be a fusion, and not just an admixture, of the elements of sight and sound and feeling. It is revealing that the theory of rasa or aesthetic emotion has been uniformly applied to all the three arts of painting, drama and poetry. Thus a dancer is required to be well- versed in the art of painting; and a painter is required to be

well-versed in the art of dancing. Great poets, of course, have always excelled in using the beauties of form, shape and colour as a means to evoke the aesthetic emotion.

Ancient Tamil dramatic texts have not survived. But Cilappatikaaram the most celebrated nataka kappiyam in Tamil is a mine. We may see a little of it

The scene is the Cauvery bank.

> On the river-bank sands, under the shade of a punnai tree, on an ivory bed overhung by a canopy adorned with alluring pictures, Matavi is in the company of her Kovalan. Matavi salutes the yal of rare melodiousness with folded hands and uncovers the decorative wrap, the yal looking like a bashful young bride. She goes through the paces of the expert musician, now plucking a string, now caressing it, now giving a hard stroke and deftly passing her fingers from one string to another. Her jewelled fingers flitting on the strings look like a buzzing swarm of bees. Matavi hands the yal to Kovalan remarking, 'It is not for me to ask you to play', as if to suggest that she would like Kovalan to indicate the tal. Kovalan begins to play and Matavi is in raptures. But her beautiful world of fancy is rocked by Kovalan's first song.
>
> Hail to thee; Cauvery! When thy royal lord makes love to the Ganga, thou does not sulk, bless thee, beautiful Cauvery, Not to sulk even when your lord makes love to the Ganga is the greatness of virtuous wives, so I reckon, beautiful Cauvery!

Matavi wonders whether Kovalan is nursing a secret love in his heart. When Kovalan finishes his song and hands the yal to her, she is in a mood to tease him, and replies to him in song in the same strain.

But Kovalan would have none of it. He thinks, 'This deceitful girl is fancying some other lover'. He is piqued and saying, "The day has come to a close. Let us leave", he leaves without waiting for Matavi to join him.

> Matavi rises up slowly; the chatter of her maids galls on her ears; she orders them to stop and goes her way.

The foregoing is a whole compendium of stage directions, acting nuances and play of emotional modulations. It is a grand aural—visual-aesthetic whole.

Examples of the dramatic visual in Tamil literature can be multiplied. Sita, when Hanuman spots her in Asoka Vanam, looks like 'a painting soiled by smoke'[4] The king in Perunkatai takes a fancy to the queen's make-up maid. The king and the maid exchange secret love messages by painting them on the face of the unsuspecting queen who goes from one to the other[5] Civakan's queen catches him in the act of painting a picture of a beautiful girl whom he had saved from the clutches of an elephant and drama ensues[6]. Narada draws a picture of Valli and Murukan seeing it falls in love with the owner of the face. But Cankam literature deserves special mention[7] The use of painting in plot development in Uttara Rama Caritam and translations of other sanskrit plays in Tamil is not mentioned here.

Almost every poem in the akam tradition can be described as a 'play in miniature'. There is a given picturesque setting, a situation, a character in crisis and direct speech. However short, each poem evokes an aesthetic emotion, often conjuring

up exquisite visuals. Netunalvaatai is one of the longer poems. The opening scenes present the gruesomeness of the inclement weather in the forest region 'The very mountain shakes in the chill' The poet takes us through many graphic encounters enroute to the queen's chamber in the city. She is alone, the king is away at war and she feels forlorn. A maid approaches her and speaks the only dialogue in the whole poem of nearly 200 lines. "The king will come back, this very day". The inconsolable queen breaks into tears and looks longingly at the ceiling She envies Rohini, the beloved of the moon, who is constantly by his side, as painted beautifully on the canopy overhanging her bed The scene immediately changes to the battle-field where the king, at that midnight hour, having no time for thought of love or rest, is going on his nightly round, bringing cheer to his wounded men

In passing, we must mention, however briefly, the dramas in paint, particularly on the temple walls and in the caves. As an example, we recall the bursting in of Lord Siva as an old man, into the wedding mandap, to prevent Sundarar from marrying and claim him as his own bonded slave. Sundarar's ascent to heaven and many other scenes are depicted in this composite painting But the inclusion of a small but crowded kitchen scene, showing the hectic preparations for the wedding feast under way even when it is about to be stopped, is a masterpiece of dramatic invention

In fine, the Tamils, valued painting as an ultimate in the beauty of form. To say that a maiden looked like a picture was to shower the highest form of praise on her. The same, if it is a building, a palace or any other. The Tamil's talent for drama is very evident from the ancient classics

Now the two arts are perceptibly joining forces Indian artistes and writers had been uprooted from tradition during the last two centuries and more. Like Tagore's traveller, they have been knocking at every alien door before coming to their own. It is timely to ask now what lies ahead for art, artistes and society in today's context.

Gandhiji presided over a meeting of the writers and artistes at Madras in 1946. The gathering included poets, painters and play-wrights. By way of topical interest, it may be mentioned, that he was presented with a portrait of his own in oil. Gandhiji promptly put it to auction. Somebody bid one rupee. Gandhiji laughingly remarked, No, it is worth at least five hundreds' Finally he gave it away for three hundred and fifty. During his address, Gandhiji wanted the writers and artistes to ask themselves, 'Why inspite of all our efforts Indian independence had not been achieved?'

Many would say that the question is as relevant today, in 1982, 35 years after achieving political independence, as it was in 1946.

Hopefully, painters would paint, and dramatists would dramatise that question most effectively, so as to bring a wide awareness of our social condition and social responsibilities

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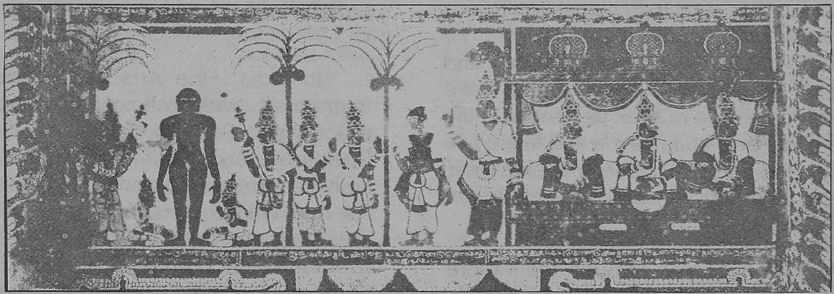

Jain temple- (Vardhamana) Detail of paintings on ceiling in outer wall. Tiruparu-tikunram - District Chingleput.

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ARTIST AND HIS PATRON

Leela Ganapathy

The beginning of Man is nobody's guess; so also the beginning of Art. Right from the time when Man started shedding his bestial qualities and characteristics, he should have been seeking some diversions to satisfy and please his senses in a different plane He should also have been searching *for some way out from the routine chores of* his life. Most probably, during his leisure, he should have been imagining things, as a human mind is always imaginative. Therefore, he should have discovered ways for expressing visually by signs, figures and pictures. His aesthetic sense should have given him the urge to seek perfection to the shape of his own imagination and made him an artist; for, an artist is one who expresses himself in a better way and in a better form than others.

As one traverses through the various stages of developments of mankind, irrespective of the geographical location of the aborigines, we find ornamental pieces of different crafts like weapons, jewels and utensils. It speaks of the progress of Man in the aesthetic field throughout the world and it bears testimony to the unending endeavour towards perfection. TamilNadu, is not an exception, as it is, though evidence is lacking in TamilNadu, as such, about such periodical developments during prehistoric times, in the various fields of Art. The civilisation in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in Sind and Punjab (west) respectively called "Dravidian Civilisation" speaks volumes of his ability, capacity, skill and imagination in the field of Art. The findings in these places speak volumes of his comparative perfections in the field, at that time.

In India, Fine Arts had always been interwined with religions and religious practices. Painting, Music, Dancing, Sculpture and other multivarious Art activities are connected with our temples. As one wades through the abundant art pieces, one can see only the forms of Gods predominantly portrayed in all the different fields of Art, which trend continues even today. Appreciation and projection of Nature is only secondary. Whether he be a painter, sculptor or an architect, he is always involved in the reporduction of Godly images. The available book of Silpa Sastra and Chitra Sutra defines and prescribes the various Lakshanas for the reproduction of

these images, for in India, religion was given the pride of place. The Royalty and the Rich have displayed their desire to construct several temples and places of worship and the artists were involved in the making of these monuments. Moreover, the artist is also expected to be religious-that too, one who understands the importance of religion, religious implications and the other religious practices. The artist undertakes the work, not as a mere worldly chore, but as a religious fulfilment and a pious mission. In art pieces of Buddhist and Jain influence and in Hindu themes, we can see only the reproduction of Gods in their various forms and splendour, whichever may be the media of expression, viz., Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Music and Dancing.

The paintings of the ancient artists are exhibited from the surviving places like Ajanta and Ellora cave paintings, Cittannavaasal and Thanjavur and Kancheepuram temple paintings in Tamil Nadu. This course of Art, Drawing and Painting also developed in its excellence, during the past centuries and is being practised and appreciated by one and all.

The paintings were symbolic in their expression of the spiritual life of India. The dominant note was religion and the chief feature was mysticism. The painter, as a priest, learnt religion with its Art. He was an adept in literature and allied arts like Music and Dancing. The painter did vibrate with expression from all this.

The painters in India are akin to the Yogis. The Chitra Sutra says that the painter is a holy man in essence and he used to sit in a holy attitude, facing the east and visualised Dhyana Sloka and produced a picture with great devotion. The characteristic of a painter is also mentioned hereunder:-

The painter must be bright, smiling, care-free with ennobling thoughts always in his mind. The Indian painter was so much engrossed in his art that he sought communion with the Almighty and created his masterpiece, not in a spirit of imposing his personality on the world by seeking admiration, honours and fame, but in obliterating himself and deriving supreme satisfaction in that his art was an offering to God, a mode of worship. It is said that the first painter was Vishnu himself, as he took a mango leaf and with its juice sketched on his thigh the most beautiful form of a nymph which at once became a living being and it was named 'Urvasi'. It surpassed every other living thing by its superior grace, perfection and charm.

It is said that Narayana (Vishnu) taught Chitra to Viswakarma, son of Prabhasa who spread the knowledge throughout the world. Viswakarma is said to be the artist of Gods, who is foremost among the artists and the Master of Arts. He is the sculptor of Gods. Mayan is said to be that of Rakshasas. Men on earth who adopted the techniques of different branches of Art and fashion of Art, worship him as the divine artist and architect to whom they owe everything.

Persons who were predominantly practising the Arts of Carving, Moulding, Building; Making Weapons and Utensils belonged to the Viswakarma Community. They are trained from their childhood. Their first Guru is their father and they enter as apprentices and emerge out as fullfledged artists.

We have made our study of the available materials, records and evidences

of the Art of painting, Sculpture, Carving Designing etc. They are also artists in the artistic sense of the term. Practically, they are the artists who thrived by the support and encouragement by the royalty and the rich and also those who survived the pangs of poverty and also braved the antagonistic conditions in the society at large.

The earliest reference to the painting is to be found in Purannanuru by Madurai Koola Vanigan Chettalai Sathanar. Pandian Chitra Madathu Thunjia Nanmaran-which means that there was a Hall for painting where King Nanmaran had died.

Women were also well versed in the Art of painting. The fact of Madhavi learning Drawing and Painting is mentioned in Manimeekalai:-

'Ovia Cennuul urainuur kitakkiyum
Karrut turai pookia Porrotimankai *1.

Besides Dancing, she was well versed in Painting by studying "Oviya Cennuul" (Text book on painting). Different names are given such as "vattikai Cceyti" (painting) and "Punaiya Oviam" (Drawing) in Manimeekalai.

In Cilapatikaaram, the following lines are mentioned about the settlement of Braziers, Carpenters, Black smiths and Gold smiths in Maruvurpakkam of Kaveripoompattinam.

"Pattinum mayirinum Parutti nuulinum
Kattu nunvinai kaarukar irukkaiyum
....
Kancakkaararun cempu ceykunarum
Marankoh raccarun karunkai kollarum
Kannul vinainarum maniittaalarum
Poncey kollarum nankalan tarunnurum
Tunnakkaararum toolin tunnarum
Kiliyenun kitaiyinun tolil pala perukkipp
Palutil ceyvinaippaal kelu maakkalum" *2

In Manimeekalai it is said that the "Vinainar" (may be carpenters) of Magada, the Braziers of Maharashtra and the Carpenters of Yavana (foreign country) had mingled with the indigenous artisans and constructed beautiful buildings.

"Makata vinainarum maraatta kanmarum
Avantikkollarum Yavanattaccarum
Tantamil vinainar tammotu kooti
Kontu initee yootti" *3

In the historical period, there are evidences that the kings were not only patrons, but also artists themselves. Under their reign, the artists were greatly honoured and flourished.

The royal artist, Mahendra Varma, the Pallava King was learned in Music, Painting, Sculpture and Literature. N.C.Mehta remarks:-*4

"Mahendravarman bore among others the epithet,

*1. *Manimeekalai Uur Alar: 31—32*

*2. Cilappatikaaram — Indira Vilaa Urr etutta Kaatai

*3. Manimeekalai, Siraikootta marakkoottamaakkiya Kaatai 11. 107 — 110

*4. N C Mehta — Studies in Indian Painting

'Chitra Puli' - literally the tiger among the painters and also an accomplished poet, musician, and a great builder and it is probable that this "curious minded" sovereign Vichitra - chitra, as he called himself was also a painter".

His father, Simhavishnu and his predecessors, Narasimha Varma and Raja Simha Pallava were great art masters, admirers of art and honoured the artists.

The Chola Kings especially Rajaraja the Great, and Rajendra Chola honoured the artists on a very high level. Evidences are found in inscriptions on the walls of temples built by them. Even during the Pandya and Vijianagara periods they enjoyed the respect and royal patronage.

Artists of exceptional ability were entertained in the royal courts to execute royal commissions, to judge the pictures brought and also to teach painting to the members of the royal family who learnt various Arts like Music, Dance, as well as Painting in a well-planned scheme of liberal education.

The artists who were involved in the construction of temples in various fields such as Stone Carving, Metal Carving, Metal Casting, Painting etc., were known as Sthapathis. The Silpa Sastras have divided these artists into four categories - Sthpathis, Sutra Grahis, Viteki and Sakshachan among whom sthapathis were given the pride of place.

Artists worked for a limited number of customers, unlike other craftsmen working for all. The master artist had always high score in his exceptional capacity. The status of the artists in the early period was sufficiently high and noble. The artists commanded great respect for their professional skill and excellence in character.

The art pieces were preserved in special Art Galleries in royal palaces, public Art Houses, etc The connoisseurs and other enlightened citizens of the kingdom took pleasure in collecting art treasures. Even bed rooms were decorated with beautiful painting.

The artists were ever aware of the superiority of their Art and when occasion required, the artist could rise equal to it and prove his worth. A special method was in vogue to challenge other painters in royal courts.

There are also inscriptional references to the artists. The word "Taccan" was commonly used for all the artists like stone masons carpenters, etc. During Sangam period, the carpenters were called "Maamkol Taccan". The second and third Century epigraphs refer to a stone mason who carved rock beds, for Jain saints, as "Taccan" - the descendants of Sthapathi Kula. Mamandur inscriptions speak of the rock bed which was made by Ciruvan. In the copper plates of Hallahara the acharyan is mentioned as Viswakarmacharyan.*5.

Velancheri plates of Aparijita, not only mention the name of the engraver, but also tell that he got a village of wet land as the remuneration.*6. Vijayannan is described as the foremost among the Silpis holding

*5 P.S M. Page 390

*6. Velanjeri Plates of Aparijita — Dr R. Nagasamy

fortune and born out of the grace of the kings. He was born in the City of Kanchi.

In the court of Damburaraman, there was a very famous architect who constructed the great Sundaravaradha Perumal temple at Uttiramerur[*7] He was well versed in "Vastu Vidya" - the text that details with the architectural details of the buildings and Agama Sastra.

The names of a few of the artists who could have worked on the famous temple of Mamallapuram are engaged on a rock west of the canal in Mamallapuram.

The artists had been engaged, not only in engraving the royal charters and in the construction of temples, but also in establishing irrigational sluices. The Kuvanantaccan is said to have made the sluice which was gifted by Nakkan, the son of Korrayanandar of Arrur situated in Nedungal Nadu, a sub-division of Indurkkottam during the reign period of Nandivarman II.[*8.]

Dalavaipuram copper plates say that the chart was engraved by Nakkan who was the foremost among the Silpis, and Nakkan is stated to be the descendant of those who had carved bow, tiger and two fishes, the emblems of Chera, Chola and Pandya on the Himalayas and the father of one who composed Prasastisesham of the chart. The composer of the Prasastisesham of this chart is also an artisan, a black smith[*9.]

There are also indications of royal patronage, not only by the kings but also by the queen. Lands, houses etc. were granted to them with gardens, and the right of getting half a share in fishing in tanks. They were given special privileges and they were associated with the construction of temples which were on the increase. They were very learned in Vedas, Agamas, Vasthu Sastras. They were truthful and upright in their conduct. They knew not only Astrology, but also testing of earth and finding out flaws in stones. The names of these artisans are also inscribed in various temples. For example, in the Big Temple at Thanjavur, Raja Rajeswaram, Taccan, it mentions about Veera Cholan Kunkarmallan alias Raja Raja Perumtaccan His assistant, Ilatti cataiyal alias Kandanidittaperuntaccan and Kunavan Madurantakan alias Nittiya Vinoodha Peruntaccan. He was given several gifts. The master Sthapathi Rajarajaperuntaccan got three shares, while the others got three fourths of the shares each in recognition of their service.[*10]

In every village, there had been some portions of lands of Taiccakkani[*11] Tattarakkaani[*12] Acaariyakaani[*13] etc In Alangudi village, a portion of the land was known as "Silpaacarya Kaani". There are also inscriptions to show that the temples have allotted some portion of their lands to the artisans permanently.[*14]

There are also several cases of donation by these artists to the temples. The artists were held in high esteem and status and

*7. V. Ganapathy Sthapathi — *an interesting inscription* from Uttaramerur Seminar on inscriptions, Page 179.

*8. Dr R Nagaswamy — Chingleput District Seminar on History — Page 89

*9 Dalavaipuram copper plate 11 214 to 224.

*10. S.I.I. Vol II No.66.

*11. S.I.I. Vol V No 991.

*12 Ibid No. 515.

*13. S I I Vol IV No 438

*14. S.I I Vol V. No 515

they had donated cash, land and sheep to the temple. Sannayakakoyir Peruntaccan had donated his lands, cash and sheep to the temple of Thirurvenkadu Udaiyar as Thiru-villakkuppram"*15 Srikavaimangala Peruntaccan of Kuvam is said to have gifted gold to burn a perpetual lamp (Thungaa-Vilakku) to the Mahadevar of Perunthikoyil. The contemporary history is also always inscribed on the walls of temples with the help of these artists.

During the Vijianagara period, the artists were given great encouragement Temple construction found its importance and the names of the Sthapathis who have erected Northern Gopuram in Nataraja temple are found carved on the Gopuram itself.*16

The Nayak rulers had always patronised the artists. They appear to have continued the special privileges and gifts to the artists. The privilege of using an elephant, double chownes, white umbrella, palanquin, tents etc. when they went out to Madurai and Thiruchirapalli Desams was conferred on artists during the reign of Madurai Nayaks - Vishwanath Nayak in 1659 A.D. is supposed to have issued a decree to that effect.

The king's special favour of protection to this class is evidenced from the Mauryan inscriptions - "he who makes the artisan lose his eye or hand will be put to death".*17

On the other hand, the artists proved worthy of such favours and went about their work with dedication and self-sacrifice.

During the reign of Maruthupandian of Sivaganga near Kalayarkoil in Ramnad District, the legend has it that Kuppu Muthu Achari was asked to make a big chariot for king's royal procession. He completed it and was allowed to ride it in state. It was not out of any conceit or vanity but on account of some premonition which he had that the first rider on the chariot will die in an accident. In fact, Kuppu Muthu Achari who rode in that chariot died on the spot in an accident and on his death bed, he explained to the king his premonitions and how he wanted to save the king being the victim of the accident.

Raja Sarafoji of Thanjavur, the illustrious Maharashtra King of the 18th Century, was a pioneer in arts. He collected many art books and art relics and he made the local artists imitate the artistic beauty and the work-manship of the art relics by giving them patronage Thanjavur art plates and Thanjavur paintings are a few that can be mentioned.

The construction and renovation of temples which was going on steadily during the rule of the kings of Tamilnadu started to wane with the advent of the British. It is at this juncture, when there was the real danger of total extinction of the art. The Nattukottai Nagarathar community, they being pious and religious, with the resources earned in foreign trade and commerce financed the renovation and construction of temples from Kanyakumari to Kalahasthi. The Sthapathis were having steady patronage from the Nagarathar during the 19th and 20th Centuries by the construction and reno-vation of temples at different places Pariyur temple in coimbatore District, Siva temple in Kalahasthi etc. are excellent instances. After independence, the Central and State Governments, revived these works of the

*15 S I I Vol V. No 985

*16. Dr Nagaswamy — Yavarum Keelir Page 251

*17 M Crindle — Ancient India as described by Megasthenes and Arrian.

Stapathis

Vaidhyanatha Sthapathi, the descendant of the Thanjavur Group who founded the Training Institute for Sculpture at Mahabalipuram is one of the leading artists of his times who had staged a come back at the instance of the Government. He was also the recipient of National Awards by the Central Government. His illustrious son, V.Ganapathi Sthapathi who succeeded him as the Head of the College of Architecture and Sculpture, Mahabalipuram had expanded it as well as his activities and he is now an artist of world renown. He has constructed many temples both in India and abroad. He is also the architect of Poompuhar Art Centre at Kaveripoompattinam and Valluvarkottam in Madras, and in all these activities, the initiative and benevolence of the State Government have played an important role

The Government's keen interest in the artists is evidenced by the institution - Government College of Arts and Crafts, Madras. The College at Madras came into service in 1850 under the British chief, Dr.Alexander Hunter. It developed into a pioneer art institution under the Principalship of Roy Chowdhury He was succeeded by K.C.S Paniker, R. Krishna Rao, S. Dhanapal and L. Munnuswamy. This institution, with the help of and aid from the Government trained artists in the field of Painting, Sculpture, Ceramic, Textiles and Visual Communication The Cholamandal artists are all the products of this College. Under the leadership of the above heads of the institution many eminent artists like Sreenivasalu, Santhanraj Antony Doss, Janakiram, Kanniappan, Sultan Ali, Surendranath, K.M Gopal, Nanda Gopal Panicker, Vasudev, Alpanso, Bhaskaran, Vidyashanker, Gopinath etc. have emerged.

These artists have taken upon themselvles the task of developing and spreading various trends in contemporary Indian Art, and at national and international levels.

The Central Government has formed the Lalit Kala Akademi and Ovia Nun Kalai Kuzhu with a view to encouraging artists throughout the country. New National Awards were given, Grants and aids to several art associations and institutions as well as to individual artists are also given by the Akademi. Fellowships are also awarded for higher training and research in the field of arts. The formation of a separate Ministry of Culture itself indicates the importance which the Government of India attaches to the field of arts and the artists Thanks to the several efforts, encouragement and activities, Art in India especially in Tamilnadu, has revived.

In today's world of computers, spacecraft lasers etc. even an artist has become greatly futuristic. Gone are the days of guidelines, rules and even the religious trends Today's artist is a creative thinker who beautifies and elaborates everything around him from a crushed piece of paper to the exploring spacecraft. He sees colour and form everywhere. Nowadays, the artist is completely uninhibited. There are no restrictions for his creative thought. No doubt, an artist is a person who appreciates aesthetically anything and everything he may see, perceive and project. This was not so in the past, as artists were formerly deeply religious A few firm criteria were followed. But now, due to the contact of the East and the West, the outlook and the horizon have changed, not only in the perception of the image, but also in projecting them. The artists have now taken libertry in appreciating the nature, not as it is

but as he feels . He sees and uses the media to project the reaction of Nature, Moreover, his patrons are not narrow-minded and pedantic in their outlook and they encourage the artists in all forms. The concept of Modern Art has also brought about a radical change in projecting the abstractism in the field of Art.

Unless there are some self-imposed regulations on the artists, I fear that it had gone a little too far and may even make one forget and ignore the traditions of India and towards this end, something should be done by the present day artists.

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AN ARTIST'S CONCEPT OF ART

V.R.Amberker

I am very happy to be here among my old friends. I have not written my paper. I told Prof. Raman that I would make my points by speaking extempore and that my speech could be recorded and I could correct it and prepare the final script. The topic of today is "The concept of Art of an artist". Talking about art is always difficult. Oh, the very word art! There are volumes on it. What do we mean by art? There are different kinds of art, like fine arts, performing art, etc. My own discipline has been in English literature at the college level. I have also studied Sanskrit. Then I happened to be a painter also early in life. This is my working as an artist I was indeed involved, right from my early days, in the activities of art of the Bombay presidency - at that time it was not Maharashtra . My friends always used to say, "You are a better fellow, you can speak well, go ahead and say this on our behalf". I used to speak at Lalit Kala Akademi and many other institutions. Since 1939 or 1940 I have been associated with art activities. This is the only justification for me to be with you. I am an old man who has memories and what I say may interest you.

I have with me The Illustrated Weekly of India, dated September 22, 1963. It carries pronouncements by some famous artists. For example, Hebbar has said: Art means an expression of my own experiences through my chosen medium. Krishna Reddi has said: "An art work is an expression skilfully carried out". Art has many faces and many faces and many sides. It is something like a Calder mobile. You know Calder was an artist who did mobiles-abstracts cut down and put on the wheel. So whichever side they turn, they go on moving about. Multifarious aspects, innumerable aspects come to you. So mobiles are never steady.

To start with, I say that art is a free and spontaneous activity of the human mind. This is not a logical definition, but a good description to start with. The second thing will be: Seeing the form, perceiving the form. What do we mean by this? Here we are concerned with the process of turning visual perceptions into visual images. There are words each with many meanings. There will be different meanings for a word in each individual mind.

Then you come down to the organisation of the sixth sense which keeps you out

of confusion. Art ever changes and never changes. Note the contradiction Art ever changes in the context of the superficial expression of the form. But a basic thing cannot change. To-day, in the post-modern period, the question: "What is art?" has no relevance. What is important is the assertion: "This is art". Creativity lies in the changing relationships between form, matter, material, etc. Creativity is finally establishing new relationships. It is just like that pattern or moving the hand like this, like this, this way, etc. Beyond that your consciousness will not go because it is the limit of the human mind as we understand it to-day. Art is thus a free and spontaneous activity of the human mind following its own principles of rhythm, balance and proportion. In poetry we find the rhythm changing according to a particular metre and there are new relationships emerging. Now what is behind this pschyologically? Unless we understand this, we will not be able to understand abstact art as such. When art becomes abstract, it has got a basic principle behind it. Perception is most important and it has its origin in the human mind There are volumes written on perception. How do you perceive? If you want to draw, for example, you just start drawing like this. Principles are always present in a good drawing because the human eye is disciplined. Reading a painting and perceiving it are two different things. Let me demonstrate. I am drawing a form in bolder lines, so that you can see it. First thing is to divide it into this area. Suppose I make it like this. What would you notice? It comes out here like this, and anyone can say what it is.

Don't worry whether it is right or wrong. It is a human figure. Somebody says that this is a horse. You can turn it into horse and you can turn it into an ass and whatever you want, you can turn it. When you see it, space is divided. So different forms emerge from the same thing and you give a meaning to it. You will know how much you are imaginatively capable of visualising many things and that is what specially happens in abstract art or distorted art like that of Picasso. Picasso is the ideal example. You can see distortion in Mahesamurti at Elephanta which is the most modern of modern art. If you stand before that image and take a series of photographs one after another, you will know that the whole thing is a sort of amalgam of abstracts. It is not a static, dead sculpture. So you will find that distortion is not the invention of the modern artist. It is there in Indian art and that is why I sometimes say that most modern experiments were attempted in the ancient Indian art. The human mind is creative. It is bound to have many dimensions and offer many surprises. Then there is another process that is truly visual surprises that turns perception into visual image. Let me explain. Now you have all the things you are seeing. They are all visual images. How do you perceive them? If you have a child in the family, observe his art, his drawing. Don't tease him. A child always draws with some principles in mind and the composition is there. If you see child art, you will be initiated into modern art as well as classicial art. I understand that a child has a keen sense of rhythm in music also

Now about signs and symbols. They are a separate subject with which students of literature and philosophy are familiar They know what signs and symbols are. These have many meanings, which are commercially exploited as trade names of important companies manufacturing drugs, chemicals, textiles, etc. Today an applied artist is more creative than a painter or a sculptor. We find

the symbols they create effectively project what they stand for.

There are other signs, such as traffic signs from which we cannot get away. There are many other signs too. The meaning depends on how and when a sign is used. So signs are inseparable from any art and any department of knowledge.

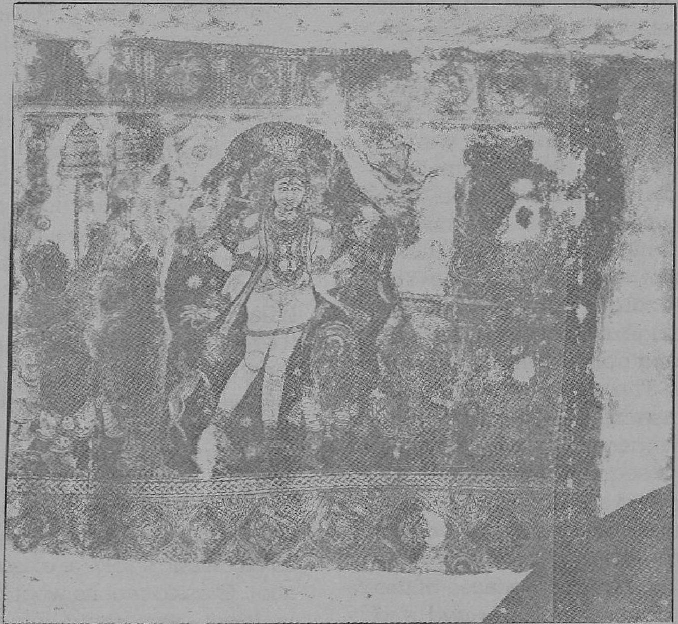
What do we mean when we say that art ever changes and art never changes?

When we say that art ever changes, what we mean is that nothing can exist in the same dimension. Let me demonstrate. Suppose this is the part I have drawn. Now if I want to draw exactly this ten times, it will not change but at the same time the ten drawings will not look alike. Art always changes in the sense that style changes. Suppose there is an English sonnet. But sonnets can come without language, without the rigidity of the lines, certain emotions produce them and emotions change. You find this in poetry as well as in art, you find certain things change and certain things never change. Take voice, for example. You have got a tape recorder down there. If one of your famous singers sings today and he sings the same song next week in the graph it will be different. The change will be due to mood, the response from his audience, etc. Thus art ever changes and never changes. The other thing is social pressure because certain things are said and certain things are not said. In iconography there are certain conditions. They say this icon is this and that icon is that. This is Ganesha because of this and it belongs to a particular period and particular area. The most important point to note is this. In the post-modern period there is no interest in the question, What is art? The assertion, "This is art", is what matters. Creativity lies in changing the perceptions. Anything can be art. Not painting alone. Today's art is new art and it can be accepted if it satisfies one's visual curiosity. This is art. Anything can be art. For example, photography. Suppose I superimpose one photograph over another you see creative photography. The same thing would be true of surrealistic painting. You may ask: What is surrealism? What is impressionism?, etc. If you have any interest, you can ask. I will try to answer. There are certain things ever present in India. Point out all these qualities which are perennial. They make the art of Ajanta modern. I have taken certain areas of Ajanta. I have taken transparencies and blown up some details to show how abstract painting at Ajanta is and that abstract painting can be identified with the abstract painting of Europe. I do not belong to those people who believe that meaning has no place in art. I do maintain that meaning has a place in art. The story is necessary and Ajanta has all the stories. With the story you see the Ajanta painting better. You will have richer appreciation of paintings with stories than mere, formal compositions. Even if you turn the abstracts at Ajanta upside down, the balance is not disturbed and the meaning is there too. After all, language is the characteristic of the human mind. Not only language of symbols and sounds but language with meaning which you go on expanding and enriching. That is the advantage we have. There are certain things which we describe as classic. For example, you play cricket or hockey or football; we say a classic stroke, a classic kick or a classic shot. Classic means what? Something which is ideal, something which is taken as a model, something new.

So classic is a recent idea. I don't believe in bad art, there is no such thing as

bad art. Before any peak of classicism there was always decadence and that decadence was so hurting, so painful, so turbulent. So if you want to see your classic art you must first see your decadence, so that you do not loose faith in any area of life. There are movements that give you a sense of classicism and a sense of decadence. The aspect which most interests the painter is the material. We were particular at one time that water-colour should be used only for this purpose or that. If oil is used, only the particular oil should be used. We were at that time so narrow-minded. Now the artists are not. Many of us were not educated. We could not read or write. We only knew how to paint and there was always secrecy. How much varnish one used and in what proportion, etc. We were curious because we were not educated.

What about realism in painting?I will tell you a story. Once a celebrated painter who used to be recognised and honoured every year met a man with a beard and brought him to his studio for modelling. The first day was all right. The bearded man with Rs.20 earned from modelling returned the next day neatly shaved and after a smart haircut. Shocked the painter asked: "What is this?" The bearded man replied: "You are painting my portrait. So I should look beautiful. I had a nice shave and a hair cut".



Nayak Paintings on ceiling of east Corridor, 2nd row, Kapardisvara temple, Tiruvalanjuli, District Thanjavur.

THE ARTIST'S MIND

A. V. Jayachandren

We have listened to two great artists talking about "the Technique of Art", "Technique of Perception", "Technique of Learning", "Techique of Appreciation of Art",etc. I was wondering whether anyone *would speak on the artist's mind.* Dr Hebbar happily came forward and indicated the mind of the artist in his own terminology.

My talk today will be on a different terminology altogether. Not the art terminology as such, because to make my position very clear, I take certain terminologies from other disciplines. It is often said that the artists' develop in two ways: One, in mind and the other in technique. If the great Thyagaraja, who lived very nearby, had not known the craft of music, he couldn't have expressed effectively the spiritual experiences which he had. Similarly great artists. If they had not mastered the craft of expression in a particular medium, they couldn't have communicated their feeling. We have got many beautiful songs of Manika Vaasagar. He got into ecstasy; he got into a transcendental state

One of the beautiful composers, Manickavasagar, tried to express his intense joy; but there was the limitation of language. Similarly many artists try What is that state into which an artist goes in order to have a burning feeling, that is, to express himself? The moment he expresses himself he has the reward of intense joy of the mother who has given birth to a child. What is it? That is exactly what we want. Everybody speaks about the layers of mind, outer layers of mind, especially those through which you perceive through the five senses.

Scars are made in the brain. These scars, these memories help us to understand the world. But these scars themselves have limitations. For example, Dr. Hebbar will be able to distinguish about eighteen yellows. Possibly Mr. Khandalawala will be able to identify about twenty greens. Therefore every sense is being cultivated. But sooner or later you will realise that your five senses have their-limitations. The moment you realise that the senses have limited perceptions, you slip into an expanded consciousness where the chemistry of consciousness acts within you and you

perceive great things. We have been talking about "Saiva Siddhanthba Philosophy". Almost every philosophy speaks about it. Recently I happened to read atomic physics by one of the greatest atomic scientists that the world has produced. He says that when the rational mind becomes silent, man achieves the greatest awareness, and that awareness leads him to another state of awareness, and that to another and so on. He identified creativity. This is the opinion of, not an artist, not a literary genius who speaks about criticism and literature, but of a scientist who experiments in atomic physics and tries to understand the field theory and associate it with the Nataraja concept. He says that if you slip into the great transcendental state, it helps you try to express yourself in the medium over which you have a mastery. If you know the prosody you will write beautiful poetry. Soulful is your art if you are a painter. If you are a musician our music is important like that of Thyagaraja who went on singing about Rama, because it was only Rama who had touched him. Similarly every other art. Even N.S. Krishnan's great humour on the screen came to him naturally because he had reached a transcendental state Some of the greatest bronzes were produced by the sthapathis in this state Ashtathala has been distorted into Dhasathala. But the form is there. What about the content?. The content comes, not from the rational conceptual state but from the transcendental heights to which the sthapathy himself rises.. It is this we should understand. Once we reach that height, creativity expresses itself in all its ramifications.

Art should change. If it doesn't we are working against nature. That's why I often used to say that archaeologists were working against nature because nature reabsorbs all the waste, all that is built. That is natural law. If you want to undersatnd nature we should know that change is the very embodiment of nature. That's why, in Sanskrit, philosophy of life has been perfected. That is the greatness of Sanskrit itself. What I say is that change is necessary. In the early stages, art was around religion. What happened then suddenly during the Renaissance period? It became anthropromorphic and introduced a form with all muscles and veins coming out. What about the space age? There is no conceptualising at all. Man has realised his limitations In that stage, he sees colours, lines, forms. We should not say that the modern artist is wrong No. He is right, because the newer the forms, the greater the scope for one's self-realisation But this is not altogether true Muslims don't have a form to meditate on. They are all the better without it. Rightly they insist that Mohammad's face should never be shown. Why do I say all these things? After descending from great heights one does whatever strikes one. In one of the Reader's Digest articles, I recently read that a great industrialist who controlled a group of companies in America was asked as to how he decided all things, because all his decisions were always right. He replied that when complicated questions were being discussed at meetings he used to slip into his room and silence his mind through a technique which he had learnt. Then he would be back and take the first decision that came upper most to his mind. He would say, "Do this", and it was done. This transcendental vision paid rich dividends

I don't want to take up much of your time because Prof. Raman was very particular that I should be brief I am indeed thankful to you for enabling me to share some of my thoughts with you which I

honestly feel no writer of any art book has ever expressed. The transcendental state, the transcendental vision and the cosmic consciousness are always within the reach of great creative minds. Therefore, I thought that I could share my thoughts with you.

Brihadiswara temple - Main shrine Chamber No.2 east wall 1st Panel - Nayak layer of Paintings. 16th - 17th century A.D. Thanjavur. District Thanjavur.

EXPERIENCES OF A TAMIL ARTIST

L. Munuswamy

I was wondering if I was a misplaced person at this Seminar. I have been listening to the scholarly deliberations. I have been steeped into sources of great knowledge. I am a lover of art and literature and I have always been trying to learn and understand. Here, for the first time, I am in the midst of scholars, particularly on the subject of tradition. In this part of the country, tradition has been holding its sway much more strongly than in the rest of India. Perhaps we can still call ourselves the virgin India, unpolluted and uncorrupted by foreign invasions. Politically, even culturally too, we have a great tradition and we have great faith in it and that is the reason why I happen to feel that I am an alien here In the early thirties we were exposed to an alien culture. The conditions that prevailed during that time were very peculiar. The roots were already struck deep in hard rocks and we were exposed to the British education and the western culture. We were educated in a different environment altogether and we were taught to appreciate whatever was very alien. Now we realise that much damage has been done to us-to the generation that grew up in the remote pre-Independence years. We are trying to look back. The modern artist feels that he is not wanted. The problem of linking the past to the present is universal. We have a great past. But the present generation is not aware of the advantages of the great fund of ideas it has inherited. The result is that the painter and the sculptor of the twentieth century look down upon the temple and the icon as a most degraded work of the nation. The British also thought so. We once thought that the Royal Academy painters were great masters. We have been trained that way.

Gradually in the forties a very strange thing happened. For the first time a few of the artists belonging to this region began to feel that there was something wrong with the direction in which we had been proceeding. They realised that they had to seek and find their own roots-and routes for further progress. They woke up because a few of the more knowledgeable western critics and art historians, who visited this country at the time, expressed, their concern for the state of Indian art. They said: "What is this? Your people are imitating the British school or the French school. Haven't you got

anything native to your own country through which you can express yourselves more legitimately and honourably? Don't remain imitators of the European masters". In the beginning it was a great shock to us. But we started thinking and began to take a close look for the first time at our museums. Till then we had been only referring to the books, expensive ones, printed in Europe on French, British and Dutch painters. We started reading books by great oriental scholars, particularly Ananda Coomaraswamy and others and re-discovered ourselves. It was only a starting point to rethink afresh. Thus emerged a band of serious artists - now I give the names because they are important - under the leadership of K.C.S. Paniker. Prior to Paniker, D.P. Roy Chowdhuri, who hailed from the Bengal School, started establishing a School of Art, which was unique. It was not the Ravi Varma school, a product of mediocre British influence, not the Bengal School which was only a sentimental revivalist movement synchronising with the national political consciousness. Neither was it to be associated with creative work. There was a genuine challenge to the western concept of art. It was at this time that Chowdhuri synthesised the British tradition or influence and the Eastern technique and created altogether a new strain of expression through painting. Thus Madras became the capital of new art. But Chowdhuri himself had a limited role to play. Very justifiably any individual can contribute only a little to the growth of a civilisation. He cannot continue to be contributing. It is not humanly possible. So Chowdhuri was unable to lead the younger generation. At that stage Paniker took up the challenge, being very young at that time and with the advantage of his great knowledge of the western masters' works. He said that Chowdhury's concept of painting and sculpture had become outdated. During this time, in Bombay, another important incident happened.

A few of the young painters had gone to Paris and Europe, but they didn't go to England. England could not give them anything wonderful at that time It was only Paris which was the centre of art where the artists were exposed to a very fresh inspiration and they brought home some of the new tendencies and the new way of looking at things and the interpretation of things. For the first time they saw their own landscapes in rich colours and not in the dark amber, black, etc., as the British saw them. The palatte became brighter, the lines became stronger and more fluid and the composition was not so tight. Now we would not succumb to any influence blindly and become imitators. From now on as Dr. Raman said in his paper, if you want to see modern Indian painting in its significant forms go to Madras. It would not be palatable to many people. I thought somebody would disapprove of it. But nobody did. We in the South are trying to integrate our tradition into our sensibility How would one do it? It is not in our daily life. It was only very recently that after the establishment of the School of Architecture and Sculpture at Mamallapuram that we became aware of families devoted to traditional arts. Mr. Ganapathy Stapathi is doing his best to raise ancient crafts to the level of art. But the craftsmen here are yet to become creative artists. They are only repeating old forms. From the process of repetition and without proper environment nothing worthwhile emerges. So the problem of problems is how to link the past with the present. The modern ideas and insights which we have acquired cannot be thrown overboard. It is very legitimate

information that we have inherited from our rulers and through them we have seen the whole western world Now we cannot simply reject our knowledge and experience. We have to make use of them and then try to link our past with the present It is a great task Some of the artists in this part of the country have broken new ground and made great contributions. But we have yet to recognise them

So what we did at that time was to interpret the concept of the human form in a style which was indigenous to us. Here I would like to narrate what my master, Paniker, used to say. When Michelangelo was in search of a model to pose as Christ he went to a tavern and found a young man. He asked him: "Will you pose for me?". He said: "Yes". Michelangelo created Christ out of such ordinary material Years later he searched for some one to model as Judas He went around and found a man who he thought was ideal model for portraying as Judas While conversing with him he found that the model was the same person who had earlier posed for Christ. Here you have to note and understand one factor. The man who posed for a portrait of Christ could also model as Judas Michelangelo justified his action by saying that the good and the wicked were creatures of circumstances. Such an argument cannot be accepted in the context of a great cultural contribution and it does not really happen. In our daily life a good man is born and he is always good whatever be his circumstances. Now so many people attribute so many things to society I don't know to what extent I can agree Society is not always completley responsible for moulding one's character. It is the individual who makes society. In the past we have seen instances where one man could change the whole world

In the beginning we made the mistake of merely copying our sculptures, transferring the three dimensional sculptures into two dimensional paintings. We used western painting techniques for this purpose In the act of translating the voluminious sculptural pieces into two dimensional works we achieved nothing. That was not the way to prove that we had assimilated or understood the contribution made by our ancestors We were only trying to justify our existence. Many of the Indian artists were satisfied with what they did Some went to the Ajanta Caves and other places and copied the fresco paintings, and they claimed that they were Indian artists. Then another group copied the miniature paintings and said that they were also Indian painters

So it was like the six blind men and the elephant. Each man justified his existence. They had however one common enemy The artist who followed the western techniques and methods totally There was confusion which had to be cleared gradually and it was given only to very highly qualified people. One has to be not only a master craftsman, but also an intellectural. So, far the first time in the modern context, the Indian painters, under the leadership of Paniker, thought that a painter was not merely a craftsman, but an individual like a poet There was at that time a feeling that the artisans had a lower place in the social hierarchy. This morning it was proved that master craftsmen are few and they are always creators. But this was not the treatment given to sculptors at a particular time in our history. They were treated merely as craftsmen who worked at the dictates of a Pandit. The master-craftsman conversant with the sastras or the Agamas. I himself was not used to have discussions

with Ganapathi Stapathy who would say that the master craftsmen were creators and trained in the sastaras, the principles and the codified ideas, and that they were also as deeply religious as the Pandits. According to him, they were treated on par with the Pandits with whom they had discussions, exchanged ideas and worked together. I feel there was a time when Pandits meted out rash treatment to the sculptors and painters who were considered low and were treated as masons or carpenters are treated today. If these social factors had been different, probably there would have been greater creativity. I do not know. I leave it to you.

Now coming back to the Madras art movement, it was only in the late fifties that, as Dr. Raman pointed out in his paper yesterday, we had a regional stamp which only heightened our awareness of the national identity. National identity has to be there and at the same time it has to be contemporary. It can never be smelling old. It has to be fresh. Only few artists are responsible for evolving a style in which you will find the traces of a great tradition. It is not very apparent at a superficial level. It is deep and I think it reflects the spirit of the renaissance of a nation. It is not a prototype either of our own traditional culture or of western culture. A new strain. It is not apparently Indian like our wall paintings of the past. Nor does it belong to the western tradition. Between these two, there is a thin line which suggests great potential. I would not say that we have contributed much. We have yet to come to finer stages. It will take some more time. Recently a great contemporary art historian from America visited the whole of India and came down to the south and stopped by at our institution. He saw my works and those of my colleagues and said "How is it that here in the south it is very different?" He further said, "You are still retaining certain values for which your country is known." I said, "I don't know. It is for you to say. It is a way of life here". We are least affected by extraneous forces and influences and that is probably an advantage for us. The south still has a tradition of its own. Our music, for example. So this is the state of affairs here and the role of the future generations will be worth watching. There are now conflicting influences at work at the same time. Simultaneously many styles and tecnhiques are prevalent. It is so in Europe too if you go to art exhibitions and meet artists. People paint paintings which are no more paintings. They observe no basic or traditional principles of drawing, composition, etc. We may not call them works of art. They may be condemned. Perhaps at a later stage a new generation of people and new thinking will influence us and we may say that all the museums of modern art can be pulled down.

In the name of innovation many things are happening and time alone can justify their existence. Some of them can actively become part of our heritage, but most of them will fade out. So it is a challenge to the contemporary painter in India, particularly in this part of the country. Here, at this juncture, I like to suggest a few things to this University. I am very happy to associate myself with this great institution. I am particularly happy that you could get Dr Raman to preside over the Department of painting. He has a great fund of knowledge and experience. He has been associated with top ranking artists of this country for the last three or four decades. I am happy that he is with us and he will start the work soon to link the past with the present. I am sure he will achieve big things and the university will

no doubt give him a free hand in his work. I suggest one more thing, we had so far lectures on tradition. This is only one part of the story. The other part has to be filled up by bringing here as many young and modern painters as possible. They should be allowed to interact and then surely we will arrive at something significant. The answer to our basic problem is, not looking back or in front but looking all around. I am amazed at the great work done by the Thanjavur artists of the past. But certainly I would not ask my students to go and copy the Thanjavur style. I will say: "Go, see and enjoy it, but never do copying, which is only for the conservation people". I wish to paint only what I see. We are conditioned by certain changes—sociological, political, etc. Of course, I would love to be greatly influenced by the spirit of our ancestors and not by their deeds. Don't repeat what they did. So we have to find the solution to the basic problem of creativity and perhaps this Seminar has to be followed up by another Seminar, inviting art teachers, sculptors, architects, young painters, etc. It will be more lively and will produce wonderful results. Indeed it has been a very great experience for me to participate in this Seminar. I have acquired immense knowledge which will I am sure support me in my work.

Danseuse - Chola mural painting, Brihadiswara temple. Thanjavur. District Thanjavur.

VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

Karl J. Khandalavala

It has fallen to my lot to deliver the valedictory address, that is to say, 'Farewell', which is always a matter of sadness. But, at the same time, there is a silver lining. I think you will all agree with me that we have spent two very pleasant, useful and interesting days at this Seminar I feel an opportunity like this for scholars to meet each other, to hear learned papers read and to discuss them is very important The Tamil University and the organiser, Prof. Raman, have good reasons to congratulate themselves on this very successful Seminar

The vital art of Tamilnadu belongs to the age of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas, dating from about the end of the 6th century onwards. But TamilNadu is also the land where the early Sangam poets expressed their thoughts in poems which have made modern writers say in amazement· "What is this that our eyes do see? Descriptive verses, where the words seem to turn into paintings, religious thoughts beautifully enunciated and social concepts dealt with incisively". In fact these ancient poets expounded ideas which seem to be just as relevant to the world of the twentieth century as they were to the Sangam age. A Sangam poet addressing his king says· "Let thy victories be only for the glory of God and for the toiling ploughman's gain" Today men have forgotten the glory of God and despite all the talk of socialism and communism we have also forgotten the toiling ploughman Those were the days when the glory of God was at its highest and in somewhat later centuries every victory of the Pallavas, the Cholas and the Pandyas was commemorated by artistically built shrines raised for the glory of God But in the Sangam age, Siva was worshipped under a banyan tree. He had not yet entered the mighty stone temples in which he was later enshrined and Vishnu still slept on a great serpent awaiting the splendid fanes wherein he was to dwell Nevertheless, this was an age when art flourished even though not on the scale of mediaeval grandeur and we have many references to painting One amusing story comes to mind An old Tamil poet refers to a god who was painted on a wall But the god left the wall because there was no one who would bring him sacrificial offerings I have a suspicion that what must have happened was that the wall painting decayed and finally vanished So it was said that the deity had left his abode

TamilNadu is the land of the famed epics, the Cilappatikaaram and the Manimeekalai. I am not competent to duscuss their date. I can only read them in translation. But surely these two great epics belong to an age when the beautiful Yavana ships rode on the waters of the harbour of Puhar; and when the stalwart Yavana guards patrolled the city of Madurai to protect its inhabitants, and their loud laughter as they walked through the streets echoed in the silent night. There are many references to the rich culture of TamilNadu in these two great epics which have been dealt within several papers read during these two days of the Seminar. There must have been structural shrines in the Sangam age. For Dr.K.R.Srinivasan has referred to a very interesting description, namely, that the dust of the chariots as they moved along the streets of Puhar covered the paintings on temple walls for the people to see. This strengthens our belief that the people, even of the Sangam age, were involved in the artistic activities of their days and that rulers sought to bring the art of painting to their people which was once confined to palaces.

The great period of the art of TamilNadu commenced with the Pallavas, when Ganga was brought from Heaven to Mahabalipuram and Kailasa was brought to Kanchipuram. This was followed by the age of the Cholas. One of the greatest temples ever built is in Thanjavur. When Dr.Raman invited me to this Seminar, I gladly accepted firstly because it gave me the opportunity to meet several scholars and listen to so many interesting papers, and secondly, because it enabled me, for the fourth or the fifth time, to see the Great Temple known as Brihadeswara and the image of the dancing Lord enshrined therein.

Many of the temples in TamilNadu were built by the Cholas and it was no empty boast when Aditya Chola said that he had lined both banks of the Kaveri with temples. Many of these have now been discovered, thanks to Dr. Balasubramanyan who did splendid work in this direction.

What was the dominating spirit behind the art of TamilNadu which is admired not only in this country but also abroad, so much so that we have to face the distressing fact that wicked men have taken bronzes and sculptures out of our country because they are priceless treasures and thus it is that we find images of Shiva and Vishnu dwelling in exile from their temple homes.

It is said that after the Sangam age there was a long and dark night, that is, a long and dark historical night. This may partly be true but there was also a glorious dawn from the 6th Century onwards when inspired singer saints spread the gospel of Shiva from village to village and from temple to temple by their impassioned hymns and centuries before the cult of Gopalkrishna had swept through Northern India the Vaishnava singer saints known as the Alvars awakened the populace with their songs in an unburdened language which the common folk could readily understand All these singer saints enunciated a simple form of worship, namely, of complete devotion to Lord Shiva or complete devotion to Lord Vishnu. The royal Alvar, Kulasekkare, a great devotee of Lord Venkatesware, says.

"In the holy hills of Thirumalai
I want to be a bird that sings all day,
In the mountain rivulets and pools

I want to be a fish, wherein to swim and play;
I want to be the garlands that adorn Thy grace
What if they wither when the day is done
For they have seen the beauty of Thy face;
I want no other world wherein to dwell
Only the seven hills of Thirumalai
What need have I of Indra's heaven on high?".

This is the spirit that must have inspired all the great architects and all the great sculptors and painters of TamilNadu. This is the spirit that must also have inspired those who were their patrons, namely, the proud rulers of the Pallava dynasty, the Chola dynasty and the Pandya dynasty through whose munificence were created temples whose spires rose into the clouds, wonderful bronzes and also paintings of a high order.

This is a Seminar on painting and hence it may be appropriate for me to say that apart from rock shelter paintings which Dr. Nagaswamy has referred to we have others also. The earliest of them are to be found in the small shrines which surround the Kailasanath temple of Kanchipuram. Dr. Srinivasan has referred to them. Frankly I am guilty of a strong pro-Pallava bias and though it has been established without any doubt that the paintings of Cittannavaasal belong to the Pandyan age, that is, the 9th Century, the two male figures in the Samvatsarana scene on the ceiling of this cave temple reveal Pallava influence. I confess that perhaps it is my pro-Pallava bias that makes me say that the dominant force throughout the art of TamilNadu has been the art of the Pallavas on which Dr. Srinivasan has written a book of high authority, namely, "The Pallava Cave Temples".

From where exactly the influence emanated one cannot say but we do know that at a particular time there was interaction of influences all over the country. I have seen lingering Ajanta influence even in the painted Jain manuscript covers of the 11th and 12th Centuries. One sees it to some extent in the Pallava paintings of Kanchipuram. Also in some of the Chola paintings of Rajaraja's temple of Brihadeswara. My friend, Hebbar, commenting this morning on the white elephant which Shiva sent to Sundara murthi Swami to bring him to Mount Kailasa truly said that it is as magnificent as anything at Ajanta and he knows Ajanta well. All these Chola paintings are not reminiscent of Ajanta but there were master artists who could paint the white elephant carrying Sunderamurthi to Mount Kailasa, without any inspiration from the paintings of these Buddhist Caves, painters of a class that any land would be proud of and I have no doubt that TamilNadu is indeed proud of its ancient artists

Painting continued in TamilNadu under the Vijayanagar kings, as did also the art of temple building and sculpture, not within the same high tradition but nevertheless of sufficiently fine quality to be admired. I feel that the art of Vijayanagar has been neglected, may be due to the contrast it presents with the greatness of the art of the Pallavas and the Cholas. It is a somewhat stylised type of painting. Even so, it is of high historical importance as is also the painting done during the rule of the Nayaks and the Maratha rule of Thanjavur.

We have had interesting papers on all periods including the contemporary

movement, because the Seminar has dealt with paintings from early times to the present day. It has been said that tradition must play a part even in contemporary work. This is true but we need not be slavish imitators of our ancient art because that would not lead us anywhere. At the same time we cannot abandon a certain Indianness which in the present context should reflect the ethos of TamilNadu as well as that of the country as a whole. Is there not something distinctive even in the modern art of China and Japan? Was there not something distinctive in the American art of the early settlers in their few land? I feel that there is so much in our past, without our becoming blind traditionalists, which can inspire the contemporary movements. Of course I am conscious that there are other view-points also, for instance, when the Post-Impressionists and the Impressionists and the Cubists worked on certain specific theories, i.e., as to the technique to be employed to stress light in a landscape or the concept that all works of art can be reduced to simple forms such as a square, and a cube Even if one does not utilise such ideas, it is not necessary to abandon them. Certain elements of our ancient art can make our contemporary art as distinctive as certain other countries have made their own art May I remind you of what the Greek said: "Was not the engraving of a thing on wood or stone, was not the painting of a reindeer in the depths of a palaeolithic cave a practical method of saying to the movement 'Stay longer thou art so beautiful:"

May be this is not the end of all painting. Religion has a great deal to do with art. Even when depicting the gods, there is a moment, I feel, when the Sthapathi, who has fashioned an image, consciously or unconsciously says to himself "Stay longer before me thou art so beautiful"

The singer saints, even before Sankaracharya, had brought to the people of TamilNadu a new concept of religion in which there was a personal equation between man and his God. I feel that to this day it exists. I have been through the South several times and my love for the temples, sculptures and paintings of TamilNadu remains as intense as ever before I am as much a Tamilian at heart as any son of the soil

I have had several interesting experiences. On my first visit a very amusing one and on a later visit one that was momentous for me. On my first visit I climbed the rock temple of Tiruchi then known as Trichonopoly and went to the prakara where the bronzes were kept. I have a weakness for South Indian bronzes. As a young art historian I wanted to examine one of them, which I thought might be early though most of them were late. But they all were draped in garments There was a Pujari there and I said to him, "Will you please take off these garments?" He said: "No, it cannot be done" I offered him one rupee, which at that time was of some value He took off the garments of the deity and I could see to what period it belonged. He dressed up the deity again and went away. I thought that I should see some more bronzes and in this way I spent nearly 7 to 10 rupees. Finally I came to an image of Parvati I asked the Pujari to remove the garments because I was keen to decide whether it was a Chola bronze or not. He said· "No, the Goddess can never be uncovered" Being young, rash and irreverent I offered him Rs.2/- and he obliged

The other experience I had was at Chidambaram a year ago. I had been there

before but I was so far away in the crowd that I never hoped ever to be near the idol. On this second occasion I again stood at a distance from the idol, till my friends spoke to the Dikshitar. He beckoned me to come closer and then I stood within a few feet of the great Nataraja of Chidambaram, something which I never dreamt of before. Though all along my interest was only in the bronzes as an art historian, and for their beauty, now momentarily it was not the bronze icon which mattered to me. I felt that I was in the very presence of the dancing god of Thillai. It was such an extraordinary moment for me that my senses became numb for some time. Twice before I had experienced such a similar feeling a moment when the mind did not function and that was when I first stood before the great Mahesamurthi of Elephanta and again when I stood before the great Buddha image of Chandi Menduk in Indonesia. As I bowed before the Lord of the Dance I understood what was the spirit behind the songs of the singer saints who spread the gospel of Shiva and Vishnu in the Tamil homeland.

As I say farewell to all of you and farewell to the great Temple which I so love and to the bronzes in the gallery nearby for which I have unbounded admiration, the thought comes to my mind that art of such greatness as that of TamilNadu can come into being only by reason of a greater dominating spirit behind it and I recollect what I think are the most appropriate words in which to express it though uttered in another age and in another clime in the forty second Psalm of David: "As the deer panteth from the water brooks, so panteth my soul from Thee, O Lord!".

Book Review

PROCEEDINGS OF WORKSHOP IN HISTORY OF ART

Edited by Ratan Parimoo

The present volume is a compilation of papers presented, lectures given and the discussions thereof which took place at a workshop in the History of Art, at the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, under the auspices of the University Grants Commission.

The workshop took place in 1977 and the proceedings were published in 1979 but a review on it appears in 1984. So it is needless to say that the present venture is a kind of scholarly exhumation and post-mortem. Despite the delayed attempt, the present volume highly deserves a review, in view of the uniqueness of the theme. Long back as a student of history I remember to have read in a book on British History that a people governed by the rule of law were forced to exhume the mortal remains of Oliver Cromwell and hang his skeleton for "crimes and misdemeanours" So as a duty - conscious student of art history, I too find it indispensable and couldn't resist my temptation to write a review on this volume.

The bright side of the volume is that it deals with one of the most important but much neglected aspects of our University curriculum, viz.,art history. And in highlighting the issue, eminent scholars like Ratan Parimoo, Karl Khandalavala, B.N. Goswamy, S.K.Saraswati, Mulk Raj Anand, Kanchan Chakrabarti, Sunil Kothari, Kapila Vatsyayan and others have played a remarkable role.

Ratan Parimoo's working paper presents a masterly analysis of the various problems and perspectives of Art History; its need a historical sketch of the discipline, the methodology for interpretation and vocational importance. He also presents a list of Universities specilising in the field and a blueprint for improvement at the post - graduate and research levels. The consummation of the scholar exhibits itself when he exemplifies the theoretical aspects of art philosophy as expounded by Morelli, Cavalcasselle, Friedlander, Bereson, Riegl and others The ideas expressed by Parimoo seem to have had a tremendous influence over the other participants as they are reiterated in a stereotyped manner. The eminent scholar has very aptly and in the most appropriate context stressed the need for an Association of Art Historians and a Council for Art Historical Research.

The inaugural speech by Professor P.J.Madan is followed by the key-note address of Karl Khandalawala. The latter's approach to art historical studies has resulted in a brilliant exposition of its multifaceted problems. Khandalawala confines himself to five major points which point out the versatality of the scholar in working at a paper. According to him (1) Art has to be viewed in a broader perspective, i.e., history (2) An art historian should have access to and thorough mastery of original sources. (3) "Art does not exist in a vacuum. It is the expression of many things over a certain span of time, conditioned by social factors, religious thoughts, political upheavals, economic conditions and pro pagandist activities" p.37. (4) study of monuments in situ and (5) a course in art appreciation for art-historian-trainees. Though brief, Khandalawala's speech is to the point and vouchsafes is the scholar's mastery over the subject.

The plenary session proceedings are followed by a series of articles, notable among them being Mulk Raj Anand's case for originality and realism in creative arts, which emphasises William Morris' dictum "Creation should be like the first Creation - a need of man's soul" (pp. 41-7). Rajaram attempts a basic study of some of the fundamental concepts in art criticism against their theoretical background. R.N.Mehta explains how archaeology could serve as a tool to the art historian. S.C.Misra asserts the very popular view that art history is part of a broad spectrum, viz., historical studies and pleads for a thorough reform so that higher studies at the M.A., M.Phil. and research levels are made more meaningful and applied

The art critic, Kanchan Chakrabarti, limits himself to some of the problems confronted in the teaching and research of fine arts in India and declare that "we have to examine artistic heritage from a world, a human perspective, we have to be com prehensivists as artist historians and have to develop a kind of socratic dialogue with not only our students but the society at large .....historians, archaeologis and social scientists have to extend their hands in this august effort of us all" (p.67). V.H.Bedekar has raked up the question of stylistic approach in art history and tries to explain how far it has remained a phantasmagoria to both students and teachers. He is right in exposing that researchers in art "should be taught the fundamentals of aesthetic morphology." (p.71). He also asserts that stylistic approach will be "superficial" if the intricacies of particular schools and their characteristic features are not studied. Gulam Mohammed Sheikh is of the opinion that modern art vis-a-vis traditional art is much neglected. Anand Krishna in his obser vations highlights the handicaps to which art historians are liable. Lack of library facilities, hurdles in access to rare publications, non-availability of visual aids like slides, charts etc. are a few to mention. He stresses the value and relevance of study tours. Anupa Chakrabarti emphasises the importance of coins, epigraphy (again elaborated by K.D.Bajpai in other paper), the thematic content, vocabulary and philosophy of art and so on

The distinguished art historian, S.K.Saraswati, has presented a masterly analysis of the problem of sectarian approach to Indian art with special re ference to Jain iconography, particularly the

caturmukha - sarvatobhadrika concept. The well - written paper purports to prove that there can be no sectarian approach to art forms as universality of tradition is the core idea in any art expression. In the whole range of art criticism attempted in the present volume S.K. Saraswati's stands out unique as a piece, indeed thought - pro voking. Umakant P.Shah has pin - pointed the problems of research in Indian sculpture. The learned professor's view is that lack of knowledge in anthropology, dating tech niques, geography, tribal arts etc. have to be overcome. R.N.Misra has attempted a micro - study of Dehale sculptures with beautiful illustrations for identification. Similarly Devangana Desai studies the trends and prospects in ancient terra cotta art.

Dealing with silpasastras, D.C.Bhatta charya, has examined the part played by canonic literature as a basic source material for art history research. On similar lines John Mosteller has attempted a study of Sukra nitisara. A.N.Jani also deals with the same theme in an elaborate manner with refe rence to Sanskritic texts. His masterly survey of cannonic data could by all means be a model for researchers. There are also some papers on traditional architecture by V.S.Pramar and B.Rajendra Prasad, the latter on Chalukyan Architecture of the Nagara order. Anand Krishna, A.K.Bhatta charya, Ratan Parimoo, Jagadish Mittal and B.N Goswamy have attempted a survey of Indian paintings with reference to the Rajasthani schools such as Pahari and Basohli

The penultimate part of the volume has a section on decorative arts like jewellery, wood carvings etc. Chhaya Bhattacharya's paper on Central Asian Art sets a new dimension in art historical research. In addition to outlining its salient features, the author suggests new avenues of research for beginners. Similarly Nibha Joshi's paper on Islamic Art gives an anthropological - cultural approach to the problem. Though some of the participants in the workshop have lamented over the neglect of modern art within the framework of the proceedings, Geeta Kapur has come out with a case for the study of Modern Art. Though brief, it gives the due stress.

In the concluding part, the Director's report, along with the recommendations of the work-shop, is presented. With no less a person like B.N.Goswamy in the chair, the delegates have passed a series of high - sounding resolutions. Of the many accoun- ted here few deserve special mention: (1) more financial aid to institutions dedicated to research in Art History, (2) publication of research monographs on the subject, (3) financial aid to scholars for expertise training at advanced centres, (4) creation of an Indian Council of Art Historical Research and (5) Association of Art Historians . The volume ends with a list of the participants in the workshop.

An interesting feature of the volume is that it records the discussions as transcribed from tapes. Discussion in any gathering is the most formative and creative hour wherein fresh ideas are born extempore. Most seminar proceedings invariably fail to record the discussion aspect. In this respect the present volume is a rare piece and in making it a success, stalwarts like Kapila Vatsyayan, Karl Khandalawala, B.N. Goswamy, S.K.Saraswati, Ratan Parimoo and Anand Krishna have played an eloquent role. Kapila Vatsyayan's torrential

eloquence is well - known and in the present deliberations also she has let loose her sharp tongue and made her presence felt. 'Age *cannot wither nor custom stale' one's* infinite academic variety if one is sincerely dedicated to academic excellence. Thus Kapila Vatsyayan has come out with her original ideas which blow hot with immortal energy and immutable enthusiasm. The views aired by her may be summarised as follows : (1) Is there a thing called kala ka itihas (history of art), (2) Using western methodology to assess Indian art is a wrong procedure, (3) all originals should be studied *in their original form, translations* won't do, (4) stress the social history of art, (5) correlation of cultural anthropology to art history and (6) the sastra is only a deduction from practice, often deviated and purely a formal element.

Discussion is the time for debate. Here ideas emerge through one's lips spontaneously and powerfully and so need not be universally accepted, and so to say command authenticity also. Thus we find Kapila's ideas challenged by other authorities Karl Khandalawala vehemently opposes the former's third view. As originals are found in various languages we cannot expect a researcher to be a multi - linguist. So translation is the only refuge. Again it is the idea which is more important than attempting a translation verbatim. This is impossible and if any such accurate trans lation is needed one may approach a scholar proficient in that particular language. B.N.Goswamy takes up the kala ka itihas issue and warns the art historian to skate carefully. *He touches the very roots of* research in art history when he poses the query "What is art?" He also asserts that silpa has a regional connotation and time value. That is to say, silpa sastras are limited by topographical and time factors. In another context Goswamy encourages Catalogue Raisonne type of research. S.K.Saraswati *presents a case for interdisciplinary* approach. In architecture research he imagines of an engineer - art - historian. He is very scientific in suggesting it, but the difficulty is on the practical side. Anand Krishna beautifully says that a research work devoid of aesthetic analysis is no research at all. Ratan Parimoo condemns the conservative Indian mind which conceals objects from the scholar's purview. Even museum authorities are like that. If so, how will research progress if its purpose is to rediscover the forgotten or hidden art heritage of the land and perserve monuments from oblivion and destruction

To sum up, the present volume has done full justification to the job undertaken. *Having attempted a postmortem-like-review,* I would like to ask whether anything substantial has come out as a result of this workshop? As far as my knowledge goes art history still continues to be part of historical studies and no University in India has so far come forward to disentangle the various branches of art history from the original tree, history. An exception in this respect is the Tamil University, Thanjavur (TamilNadu) which has even overtaken the Kala Bhavan (Santiniketan) and the M.S.University of Baroda by instituting and recruiting staff for Departments like Sculpture, Painting, Architecture, Archaeology, Numismatics, Dance, Drama, Music and so on. I may *emphatically say that the seeds sown at* Baroda in 1977 have sprouted at Thanjavur in 1984 Thus I have a justification for attempting a delayed review also.

Before concluding, I would like to take the liberty of pointing out the seamy sides of

the present volume. Most of the papers presented in the workshop are not up to the mark. Excepting a few, most of them do not even present the bibliography. It is also disappointing, if not disgusting, to find that giants in the field like C.Sivaramamurti, K.R.Srinivasan, T.V.Mahalingam, G.S. Dikshit, K K Pillay, S.Settar, K.V.Raman and a host of other South Indian art historians are not represented in the workshop. Naturally the South Indian Art theme, the backbone of Indian Art History, is also meagrely treated and gravely neglected. In the list of institutions dedicated to art history teaching, the Pumpuhar college and Palani college of Indian Culture are omitted. Both of them have a reputation of their own. But for such minor flaws and shortcomings the present volume has done a commendable service in projecting to the Indian academic world, the vital issue of the neglect of art history and research

–Raju Kalidos

ART

All passes. Art alone
Enduring stays to us.
The Bust outlasts the throne—
The Coin, Tiberius

—AUSTIN DOBSON,
Ars Victrix

REPORT ON THE SEMINAR ON ARCHAEOLOGY

A three day seminar held under the auspices of the Department of Epigraphy and Archaeology on "Archaeology of TamilNadu and Kerala - Accomplishments and Prospects" provided an opportunity to discuss various aspects of the subject, from Pre-historic Archaeology to Archaeology of Medieval irrigation works. The Vice-Chancellor of the Tamil University, Dr. V.I.Subramoniam presided. Veteran archaeologists and historians who participated in the seminar advised younger archaeologists to take up challenging fieldwork, do it systamatically and publish the results soberly and quickly. Dr. B.K. Gururaja Rao of Mysore University underlined the necessity for carrying out, by a team of archaeologists and geologists, a thorough re-survey of the Kortalaiyar river basis to understand, fully the Palaeolithic period of TamilNadu.

Prof.M.G.S.Narayanan of Calicut University who inaugurated the seminar stressed the need for a master plan to co-ordinate the efforts of various institutions working in the field and undertake large-scale excavation programmes in TamilNadu and Kerala.

Prof.A. Sundara's paper highlighted the salient features of the neolithic phase of this area and the problems that have yet to be understood in this regard. He suggested that more attention should be paid to understand the pre-pottery neolithic phase that had been noticed in the Dharmapuri District. For this a full-scale excavation of a neolithic site should be undertaken.

Two papers summarised the general characteristics of the pre-historic paintings of TamilNadu. An interesting discussion followed on the dates of these paintings.

Two other papers on megalithic culture discussed the numerous unresolved problems pertaining to this, both in Indian and World contexts.

There were a number of papers on historical archaeology. Dr.I.K.Sharma in his detailed paper questioned the correctness of the prevailing date for many early historic sites. He emphasised that "the horizons of certain diagnostic pottery wares like Rouletted Ware, Arretine and Amphorae and Roman coins at such historical port sites like Arikamedu,

Kaveripattinam, Uraiyur or Korkai, Kanchi are throughly examined afresh and firm datum line is worked out". He also suggested that the sites of some of the existing ancient temples should be excavated if possible.

Prof. K.V.Raman's paper gave a thorough account of the excavations conducted in the ancient site of Kanchipuram by various institutions. A brief account of the archaelogical investigations of the Tamil-Nadu State Archaeology Department was presented by the Director in charge of the Department. His younger colleagues read out the findings of their excavations at Korkai, Karur, Madurai, Boluvampatti, Kangaikonda Cholapuram and Palaiyarai. Though these were brief reports, these for the first time provided opportunity to outside scholars to discuss the interesting finds that were unearthed by the State Archaeology Department. Prof. M.G.S. Narayanan advised the young archaeologists to pursue the study of the ancient sites more diligently spite of the obvious fact that there were discrepancies between the textual evidence provided by the Sangam literature and the actual findings in the excavation.

There took place an interesting debate whether there is evidence for a pre-megalithic phase in the recent excavations at Vallam near Thanjavur briefly reported in the paper of Dr.Subbarayalu. If this is proved by future digs then it would be an important milestone in our knowledge of the last phase of the pre-history of TamilNadu.

There were some interesting papers in numismatics and epigraphy of Kerala and TamilNadu. Prof.M.G.S.Narayanan discussed the significance of two coin hoards for early history of Kerala. Mr.N.Sankaranarayanan summarised the state of numismatic studies in TamilNadu. Mr.N.Sethuraman gave a good account of the progress in the epigraphy of TamilNadu during the past two decades and its bearing on the history of the Cholas and Pandyas. Two well- documented papers, one by Mr.Raghava Variar and another by our Kesavan Velu that, reported on the progress in the epigraphical studies of Kerala. Dr.R.Venkatraman discussed the information found in a new set of Vijayanagara copper-plates and pointed out how it is useful to study the establishment of Telugu settlements in TamilNadu. Pulavar S.Raju presented a report on the discoveries made by the Department of Epigraphy, Tamil University and the future plans of the Department.

There were three other interesting general papers. Dr.P.Shanmugam demonstrated in his paper that a judicious use of epigraphical evidence in combination with intensive field walking can help in the discovery of ancient sites. Mr.Vedachalam's paper made the observation that the study of the ecology of ancient Jain settlements might reveal many interesting facts for the socio- religious history of ancient and medieval times. Mr.S.Rajagopal's paper was another interesting out of the run study. It related to study of ancient irrigation works with the use of epigraphical and literary evidence along with observation in the field. The paper also suggested that excavation of ancient irrigation works, now out of use, may add considerably to our knowledge about these works.

—*Y. Subbarayalu*

TAMIL UNIVERSITY NEWS

THE RAJARAJAN AWARD

The Tamil University has instituted an award of One Lakh and One Rupees, in order to encourage and enhance creative writing in Tamil through out the world. Tamil writers living in any part of the world can compete for this award. For further information contact the Tamil University, Thanjavur-613 001, TamilNadu, India.

TOLKAPPIAM FELLOWSHIP

Dr. V.SP.Manickam, Ex-Vice-Chancellor of the Madurai Kamaraj University was awarded the Tolkappiam Research Fellowship at a function held at the Tamil University on 30-9-1983. Muthamizh-kkavalar K.A.P.Viswanatham presided. Dr.V.I.Subramoniam, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil University explained the aims and objectives of the fellowship.

PROF.H.D.SANKALIA

In October Dr.Y.Subbarayalu, Professor of Archaeology, Tamil University met the doyen of Indian Archaeologists Dr.H.D. Sankalia (retired Professor of Deccan College Post-Graduate & Research Institute, Poona) and had discussions with him in Poona about the programmes of the Tamil University. Dr. Sankalia advised that the new archaeology section of the University should function actively with well-defined plans.

T.U.SCIENCE - CELL

Tamil University, through its recently started science-cell, is launching a programme of disseminating the knowledge of science through Tamil as a free service to the public and school children. Besides its own science-publications, the University is also trying to publish the materials in the science columns of other Tamil magazines and newspapers with the co-operation of their Editors. It is also planned to invite scientists to give a series of lectures on basic sciences and to publish them in monographs. Those who are interesed in translating science materials from other languages into Tamil are requested to contact the Director of Planning and Development, Tamil University, Thanjavur-613 001, TamilNadu, India.

SEMINAR ON PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS

Seminar on Philosophical Systems was held at the Tamil University's School of Philosophy, Kanchipuram on 6.10.1983. Hon'ble Minister for H.R. and C.E Thiru R.M.Veerappan inaugurated the seminar. In his inaugural address he appealed to the scholars to edit books on Saiva Siddhantha, Vaishnavism, etc., in simple language to popularise them among the masses.

SEMINAR ON MUSIC

The Seminar on Thevaram, Thiruppugazh and Divyaprabhandam was held at the Tamil University, Thanjavur on 12th and 13th of October 1983. The Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of the Tamil University Dr.V.I.Subramoniam in his presidential address said: 'Music binds the Southern States of India together and that bond should be made stronger.

XIII ALL INDIA CONFERENCE OF DRAVIDIAN LINGUISTS

Sangeetha Mahal put on a festive look on the 24th of November '83. It was the first day of the XIII All India Conference of Dravidian Linguists which was organised jointly by the Tamil University, Thanjavur and the Dravidian Linguistics Association, Trivandrum. His Excellency P. Ramachandran, Governor of Kerala in his inaugural address declared that language was a bridge to unify the people and not an instrument to separate them. He appealed to the linguists to strive for the integration of the people through this Conference.

The need for strengthening the teaching of Dravidian Linguistics at the post-graduate level was stressed in the Presidential address of Prof.G.N.Reddy of the S.V.University, Tirupati. He pointed out that it was high time to prevail upon the Government of India for establishing an organization named as Indian Council of Linguistic Science Research (ICLSR) to promote research in Linguistics.

Dr.V.I.Subramoniam, Vice-Chancellor of Tamil University, Thanjavur in his welcome address referred to the concentration of non-Tamil speakers in Madras and Thanjavur. He said that the co-existence found in Thanjavur delta was an example for the rest of India to follow.

COURSE ON TAMIL CULTURE

The Department of Tamil studies in Foreign Countries conducts a 30-Day Course on 'An Introduction to Tamil Culture' for foreigners, from 3-12-'83 to 1-1-'84. The aim of the course is to give an opportunity to foreigners interested in Tamil studies to visit TamilNadu and understand the various facets of Tamil Culture within a short period.

THE GREATER TAMIL LEXICON

The Tamil University has taken up the important project of bringing out an uptodate Tamil Lexicon and has set up a special unit for the compilation of a 10 volume Greater Tamil Lexicon of about 1000 pages each, over a period of four years. The Lexicon will be Tamil-Tamil omitting English transliteration, translation and etymology. But each word and each meaning will be chronologically listed with citations from Classical Tamil literature and other sources. A team of five Editors and their staff are assisting the Chief Editor.

Other Publications of The Tamil University

The *News Bulletin* in English and the *Cheithi Malar* in Tamil are issued on the 15th of every month.

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